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WEST AFRICAN ASPECTS OF THE PAN-AFRICAN
MOVEMENTS: 1900-1945

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SUMMARY

This study, as the title indicates, is concerned with the West African aspects of the Pan-African movements of the 1920s and 40s. It is not, however, strictly confined to West Africa; it aims to see the subject under review in its widest context and within the complicated network of ideas which characterised early Pan-Africanism. The aim is to study the subject both in depth and in breadth.

Accordingly, the study is divided into three parts. Part I, which consists of chapters I and II gives a fairly detailed historical background as well as incorporating new material. It covers the period from the Abolition era in America to the end of the 1920s and the demise of the Du Boisian Pan-African congresses. Part II consists of chapters III, IV, V and VI, and is a detailed study of an early pan-West African nationalist body - the National Congress of British West Africa. The period covered extends from 1918 to the end of the 30's. Apart from a few cases, the bulk of the material used in these chapters is entirely new; use has been made of private papers and unpublished manuscripts and documents to throw more light on certain questions relating to the N.C.B.W.A. and to West African attitudes to transatlantic Pan-Negroism. Part III comprises chapters VII, VIII and IX. Chapter VII seems unusual in this type of study which generally assumes the non-participation of French-speaking Negroes (in our case, French-speaking West Africans) in the early history of Pan-Africanism. Chapter VII deals in some detail with the Pan-Negro thought and politics of

French Africans during the period 1924-1936, and its inclusion is perhaps a much needed departure from the standard histories of Pan-Africanism. Chapters VIII and IX cover a fairly well known phase of the Pan-African movement but the focus is mostly on West Africa. The themes dealt with include the political impact of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, the emergence of a new group of Pan-African radicals both in London and in West Africa, and the evolution of Kwame Nkrumah's ideas on political unification. Rare journals and the Sekyi papers have been used in an attempt to reconstruct and explain Nkrumah's early political views and attitudes. Impossible to have access to certain types of material or to travel grants. Professor G.A. Shepperson's counsel and deep knowledge of the history of Pan-Africanism has been invaluable, and his approach to the subject is evident throughout the thesis. My special thanks are also due to Christopher H. Fyfe, Reader in African History, for some incisive criticisms and very useful leads - and for our periodic disagreements. Mr. Fyfe's knowledge of West African history and his advice on arrangement was particularly useful. I should also like to thank Dr. Florence K. Mahoney (Gambia) for directing my attention to correspondence in the Gambia Co-Operative Department relating to E.P. Small, to Mr. John Erickson, Reader in the Department of Politics (Edinburgh), to Mr. F.W. Allen, Head of the Gambia Records Office, to my friends Mr. T. Ayodele George and M.K.B. Paal (Gambia), Mr. W. Sidor (U.S.A.), and to my father, who on various occasions assisted me with enquiries and with copies of newspapers and documents of historical interest.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis makes no pretence at being an exhaustive history of the Pan-African movement. It is merely a contribution to the growing literature on the subject, and an attempt to explore the origins, evolution, ideas and orientations of this complex movement in its West African aspects and the historical and social conditions which both united it with, and distinguished it from, the New World Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois. It is an attempt to re-interpret a complex and many-sided phenomenon whose history has been misunderstood largely because of inadequate documentation and undue dependence on the accounts of contemporary participants. West Africa has been chosen as the focus of this study not from any narrow-minded pre-occupation but for the following reasons: firstly, within the triangle of transatlantic influences West Africa was at once the recipient, critic and disseminator of Pan-Negro ideas; secondly, West Africa was, with the exception of South Africa, the only region in colonial Africa where a nationalist intelligentsia of lawyers, merchants, journalists, doctors and clergymen successfully sought to share political power with the colonial ruler, and took upon itself the duty of disseminating political ideas and values; thirdly, it was in this area perhaps more than any other part of Africa, that Pan-Negro ideas and organisations were first started by an intelligentsia which was in touch with the Pan-Africanism of New World Negroes, and indeed accepted the major premises of

the world-wide movement, but differed in its interpretation of its political goals; finally, focus on West Africa also makes it possible to deal with a neglected or relatively unknown feature in the history of Pan-Africanism - the contribution of French-speaking Africans to political Pan-Africanism during the inter-war period. The vast amount of literature on the history of Pan-Africanism has either merely relied on the accounts of Padmore and Du Bois (which do not deal with this aspect in depth) or concentrated on the evolution of the literary doctrine of Negritude developed by French West Indians and West Africans, notably by Aime Cesaire and President Leopold Sedar Senghor.

We have already remarked that this work will be mainly a work of re-interpretation on the basis of new material on the subject; accordingly, most of the interpretations advanced will be found to differ somewhat from the standard interpretations. In some cases, however, the area of disagreement is very small and the author has made use of Padmore's major work Pan-Africanism or Communism? which in spite of a few prejudices and omissions, is still indispensable in any study of Pan-Africanism. In the majority of cases, however, entirely new material from a wide range of sources has been used. Chapter I, which is also a background chapter, briefly attempts to trace the origins of Pan-Negro sentiments in the New World from the Abolition era to the end of the Nineteenth century, and the impact and reception of these ideas in West Africa during the same period. It is also an appraisal of what the author would prefer to call the

Sheppersonian thesis of Negro American influences on African political thought; the views of West African nationalist writers and publicists are considered in this context as a method of assessing the significance and extent of these influences. Chapters II to VI deal in great detail with the Pan-African movements of the 1920s and their West African counterpart, the National Congress of British West Africa. The main purpose of these chapters is to assess the impact of the Pan-African movements of this period on West African nationalism and to illustrate how historical and economic factors influenced the attitude of the intelligentsia toward New World Pan-Africanism. It is also a study in ideology and the socio-economic factors which condition it - in this case, the unique complex of factors that accounted for the intelligentsia's attitude to Garveyism. Chapter VII examines an entirely new aspect of the movement on the French-speaking side: it seeks to show that there was rapport between the French Africans and Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League; that the leadership was Left-oriented but persistently maintained a Pan-Negro policy, and that its Pan-Negroism was closer to Garveyism but differed from it in its view of the political relations of French Negroes with the colonial Power - France. The resulting picture is one of a complex movement (not the succession of Du Boisian congresses generally listed by historians) acquiring varying connotations in different parts of the African Diaspora¹ but retaining a basic

1. A similar observation was made by John Erickson in Pan-Slavism (Historical Association pamphlet, No.55, 1964), p.3.

unity on the 'question of the color-line', political autonomy for Negro peoples, and racial self-assertion. There was not one single Pan-African movement but several, at least up to the close of the 1920s.

If, after 1918, economic and educational development were partially retarded, the effects of the Great War on the nature of anti-colonial politics between the two world wars was the reverse in West Africa. In the inter-war period economic and political development proceeded at an uneven pace; in the late 20s and in the 30s there was stagnation due to the world economic crisis, and it was during this period that West African nationalism became more explicit in its criticisms, especially against unemployment and economic exploitation. Nationalism and Pan-Negro thinking in West Africa did not begin in or just after 1914 as some writers have wrongly supposed,² but the period 1918-1939 is important not only because it concerns a variety of anti-colonial politics which has received little attention from scholars,³ but

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2. W.D. Edmonds, for example, talks about 'the relative novelty of this phenomenon in West Africa', and 'the relative underdevelopment of the nationalist movement up to 1939', and of British West Africa as 'perhaps the last part of the Colonial Empire to awake to politico-nationalist consciousness', The Newspaper Press in British-West Africa, 1918-1939, M.A. thesis, University of Bristol, 1951, p.74. F. Znaniecki in a recent study, Modern Nationalities (Urbana, 1952) also errs when he states that West African nationalism began in the 1950s. But see the remarks by E.A. Ayandele in "An Assessment of James Johnson And His Place in Nigerian History, 1874-1917". Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. II, No.4, 1964, Pt.I, pp.488-489.
 3. See John Ballard "The Porto Novo Incidents of 1923: Politics in the Colonial Era", Odu, Vol. 2, No.1, 1965, p.52.

because it is a most vital period in the history of the growth of nationalism in West Africa, in the sense that it illustrates several facets of present day African nationalism, e.g. African attitudes to European civilisation and racism, attempts at Pan-Negro unity, and African attitudes to international organisations, in this case the League of Nations. This period also deserves study because it illustrates West African attitudes to Pan-Negro movements like the Pan-African movement of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. Finally, the inter-war period also forms an important prelude to the more articulate and decisive phase of both the nationalist and Pan-African movement after 1945. As one writer correctly argued in 1951, "Those thirty years (i.e. the period roughly from 1918 to 1945) formed the present day leaders of nationalism and their political memories, and in this work of political construction the intelligentsia of the colonies were vitally concerned".⁴

It is fashionable nowadays to speak as if Pan-Africanism is an entirely new and exotic phenomenon that began in 1900, or to speak as if the Du Boisian congresses constituted its sum total. But as one of the leading authorities on the subject has rightly cautioned, it is misleading to concentrate exclusively on the role of Du Bois and his congresses, important as these were in the development of the Pan-African idea: "His role, of course, in the emergence of Pan-Africanism was profound: but the scholarly

⁴. W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., p.164.

study of the phenomenon, in all its multifarious complexities, will suffer if too much emphasis is placed on his role and his writings. We still need to know more about the pre-1919 forces and personalities".⁵ It is hoped that this thesis will go some way in illustrating this complexity both in its transatlantic and West African aspects. Hitherto the development of Pan-Africanism has been seen largely as the history of Congresses led by New World Negroes: it is the author's view, however, that this interpretation is inadequate and needs considerable modification. In order to do this the subject will be examined both from a general and a particular or individual point of view. Chronology will be adhered to as strictly as possible but to make it a rigid practice would not only distort historical judgment but would hamper the formulation of meaningful generalisations about the subject under review. Historical writing on the subject of Pan-Africanism is a good example of this rigid periodisation of history; not only is the historian's difficulty increased by the tyranny of dates (a tyranny usually created by the accounts given by the participants themselves), he is also tempted to accept uncritically the version of the participants, versions which are usually partisan in nature and tend to create a kind of mythology about these movements. This study, therefore, is not strictly confined to the period 1900-1945, nor is it confined solely to West Africa; the period before 1900 is briefly reviewed as well as the immediate post-1945 period in order to put

5. G. Shepperson: "The African Abroad or the African Diaspora"; paper read at the International African History Conference, Tanzania, 1965, p.10.

the West African aspects of the Pan-African movements in historical perspective.

No single approach to the study of the development of Pan-Africanism can be expected to be faultless; but in case objections are raised on the grounds of a departure from orthodoxy, a little advice from a distinguished historian and philosopher of history might put us on our guard against accepting orthodoxy for the sake of orthodoxy:

'Historical Epochs' bounded chronologically and counter-signed with a concept or a general representation, with the figure of some personage or other symbol, are divisions of use to the memory, legitimate to this end and even indispensable..... When, however, their origin and purpose is forgotten, when they stiffen into concepts or philosophical categories, they no longer serve to make the memory of history easier, but rather to compress it, deform and mutilate it, and so, indeed, to make its truth forgotten from forgetfulness of the practical origin and empirical use of divisions by chronological periods arise inextricable controversies about the character of this epoch or that A vain attempt is made to arrive at elaborate definitions which will embrace all the facts contained in these chronological partitions, whereas the real problem, in these cases, is to define the universal forms and modes of the spirit which the titles indicate. These cannot be confined within chronological limits, but by their nature are extra-temporal. The definitions obtained should then be used in order to understand certain aspects of the facts gathered into the framework of the relative chronological epoch, which aspects are the objects upon which the real interest of the historian is directed ... We have wished only to put historians on their guard against the confusion of chronological periods with real periods, and against the false judgments and false problems, as tiresome as they are insoluble, derived from this confusion if to think is to think historically, to think is, always and solely, to individualise.⁶

In our study of the evolution of the Pan-African idea in the history of West African nationalist politics, our approach will in

6. Benedetto Croce: History As The Story of Liberty (London, 1941), pp.301-305.

general be of an ordering and schematising nature. Mannheim has suggested three possible approaches to the study of ideologies: (1) they may be presented in a manner which detaches them from 'the historical moments and the concrete social situations to which they refer', in which case we aim at categorising the ideologies principally as an attempt to discover some purely theoretical principle for differentiating between them. This approach Mannheim calls 'surface typology' since it attempts 'to present the manifoldness of life upon an artificially uniform level'.⁷ Another variant of this approach is that of the 'philosophical systematiser', but this tends to lay undue stress on theoretical principles which may be useful but not decisive.⁸

(2) We could also adopt a strictly historical approach. This method, however, while putting theories in the immediate historical context in which they developed, goes to the other extreme of 'clinging too closely to the historical'. The historian may accordingly be interested in the unique complex of causes that account for these political ideas, and to arrive at these, he takes into account all the antecedents in the history of ideas and connects the ideas with the unique personalities of creative individuals. He may, however, become so involved in the historical uniqueness of the events he is examining that he may fail to give any general conclusions about the historical and social process.

7. Karl Mannheim: Ideology And Utopia (Tr. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, 1936), p.155.

8. Ibid., p.156; this approach is referred to by Pocock as the 'tradition of intellectualising', J.G.A. Pocock: "The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry" in Philosophy, Politics And Society (2nd Series, ed. Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman (Oxford, 1962), p.185 ff.

If then, the first approach errs on the side of being too abstract, the strictly historical approach errs on the side of being too specifically concrete - too 'bound up with the immediacies of history'. (3) Between these two extremes lies a third approach which seeks to avoid abstract schematisation on the one hand and historical immediacy on the other. According to Mannheim, it is in this group that 'every clear sighted political person lives and thinks, even though he may not always be aware of it'. This intermediate approach seeks to understand ideologies and their mutations in close relation to the 'structural situations' and groups out of which they arose and whose opinions and interests they express. In this case, it is 'the inner connections between thought and social existence' which must be reconstructed around a narrative theme on which to organise the piece of history under study. In general, this is the approach that has been attempted in this study of the thought and politics of the Pan-African movement in West Africa. The author can only hope that this method will throw some light on the evolution and reception of the Pan-African idea outside the New World.

It must be emphasised at the outset, however, that Pan-Africanism is neither an exotic movement nor an entirely new phenomenon fundamentally different from other pan-movements. Like all pan-movements it has no single intellectual pedigree and is difficult to define comprehensively for the simple reason that it has assumed different meanings and orientations at various stages in its evolution. This is not to say that Pan-Slavism

and Pan-Africanism, for example, are identical, but the parallels are instructive. Both movements, like other pan-movements, are characterised by their eclecticism and by a sense of inferiority; both emphasise the importance of solidarity, whether racial, religious or linguistic: the Pan-African preoccupation with race and geography parallels the Pan-Slav preoccupation with religion and the unity of Slavonic peoples, and the effect of the counter-reformation on the development of nationalities in Europe could also be compared to the impact of the European colonisation of Africa on the growth of African political and racial consciousness. Like the Pan-Slav movements too Pan-African politics during the colonial era has been directly concerned with constitutional issues. Nearly all pan-movements, from Pan-Turanism to the Japanese concept of a South East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of the 1940s, have been concerned with religious, racial or territorial unification, and their programmes have often implied a challenge to a powerfully entrenched status quo.

To compensate for their military and political impotence and to re-affirm their cultural values, these movements tend to ascribe a spiritual world-role to themselves. From E.W. Blyden's 'African Personality' to Dostoievsky's idealisation of Slavic man, the 'Russian soul' and the 'Russian idea', the story is the same. Where Blyden writes of Africa as the 'spiritual conservatory of the world', Dostoievsky writes of the Russian 'belief in our individuality, in the sacredness of our destiny' and in Russia's

'exclusive orthodox mission to mankind'.⁹ This attitude, which the Polish historian Handelsman called 'moral imperialism', has in the case of most pan-movements been usually accompanied by a primitivistic idealisation of the past which, paradoxically, tends to act as a programme of reform - of reform through reversion;¹⁰ the same idea recurs in S.R.B. Attah Ahuma's 'philosophy of backward movement' in his The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness (1911) in the works of Blyden and in the current literature of Negritude. In all these cases, these utopias were designed to create a sense of worth, dignity and unity among people whose leaders have decided to reassert and re-discover themselves after their colonisation by an alien power.

(II)

Wherever contact between Europeans and non-Europeans has occurred, it has usually been conceptualised as a 'contact of races' or of social types, between 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' groups,¹¹ although the racial factor has varied with the degree

9. See F.M. Dostoievsky: Letters and Reminiscences (letters to A.N. Maikov), tr. S.S. Koteliensky and J. Middleton Murray (London: Chatto & Windus, 1923) p.95; F.M. Dostoievsky: The Diary of a Writer, 2 vols., tr. Boris Brasol (Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, 1949), pp.202-205; 293-297; 358-360; in particular see 'The Utopian Conception of History' at pp.360-365; pp.579-582; 626-637; 897-902. Also S.V. Utechin: Russian Political Thought (London, 1963), Ch.V.

10. See Lois Whitney: Primitivism and the Idea of Progress (Baltimore, 1934).

11. Rene Maunier: The Sociology of Colonies: An Introduction to the Study of Race Contact, vol. I, ed. and tr. E.O. Lorimer (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), pp.xi-xii.

of contact. From the Age of Vasco da Gama to the Scramble for Africa, the contact between European and non-European peoples has involved a constant struggle for economic and political mastery throughout the world. European technology and military power from the fifteenth century onwards, therefore, meant the political and economic supremacy of Europe over a wider world of non-Europeans.

In the nineteenth century, largely as a result of economic and technological factors, and a corresponding change in attitudes to non-European peoples, greater and permanent contact was established with a wider world, culminating in a crisis of race relations; so that by the turn of the century it was no longer a Colonial Question or a question of power imperialism but, as Du Bois rightly discerned it, 'the problem of the color-line - the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America, and the islands of the sea'. Hence it came about that as a result of this crisis, among certain European writers and propagandists, the self-assertion or reaction of colonised and minority groups was generally seen, before 1918, as 'the Yellow Peril', 'the Black Peril' or, as writers like Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard would have it, the 'rising tide of color against white world supremacy'. By the turn of the century, then, pan-coloured or race thinking had become the ideology of the colonised peoples; or more precisely, the utopian programmes of non-European pan-movements had become the symbols of resistance to or protest against the injustices of European rule and its

attendant racism.

It might be useful at this point to recall Karl Mannheim's functional differentiation between ideologies and utopias as they relate to social movements. Ideologies are defined by Mannheim as 'the situationally transcendent ideas which never succeed de facto in the realisation of their projected contents'. Utopias, too, transcend the social situation, but are not ideologies: they are 'those orientations transcending reality.... which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time'.¹² Mannheim gives as examples of the utopian mentality chiliastic utopias which are universalistic in outlook and attribute a millennial and messianic world-role to a particular social group or class, the utopia of liberal humanitarianism with its emphasis on the 'idea' as a regulative device in the mundane affairs of a projected future,¹³ the Conservative counter-utopianism and the Socialist-Communist Utopia. Some of these ideologies not only tend to unite oppressed groups and minority groups across national boundaries but also, because of the political ineffectiveness of the oppressed, to internationalise local disabilities.¹⁴ Hence a

12. Karl Mannheim, op.cit., pp.173-176.

13. Ibid., pp.199-206.

14. See Gunnar Myrdal: An American Dilemma, vol. 2 (McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1964), pp.810-812. The history of Negro nationalism in America from the Abolition era to the Garvey movement and the current Black Power movement, gives ample proof of this tendency. Not only has the theme of Negro identification with Africa appeared in recent Black Power literature, Stokely Carmichael has even drawn parallels between colonialism in Africa and what he calls the 'internal imperialism' and 'institutional racism' of America; for details see Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton: Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America (Vintage Books, N.Y., 1967), pp.vii-32, 38-39, 45.

system of rule based on race, power, and the values and interests of the dominant group is opposed by a counter-ideology - the utopian nationalism of the oppressed, a phenomenon which is usually seen as anti-white by the dominant group.¹⁵ This ideology of the oppressed takes the form of race pride; in their defensive posture, race becomes the measure of all things. Race pride finds expression in several forms - racial achievements are magnified to compensate for the memory of collective humiliation, an 'ideology of saviors' i.e. glorification of the individually great of the race, is developed and a new interest is taken in the history and culture of the racial group:

"The psychological states of depression, sense of inferiority and humility give way to those of a feeling of personal worth and pride..... The race conscious of the low status group are aware of past and present exploitation. They recall with bitterness the limitation of their freedom and their debasement. Grievances are formulated, becoming a part of their ideology.... The race conscious easily believe in a portentous destiny for their race.... For the race conscious among the races of low status to believe in a better future is essential. Race consciousness otherwise would atrophy and die. Hope is essential to its vitality. And to be able to believe that while they suffer and 'envision the stars' they are at the same time performing a mission that satisfies the human need for the feelings of worth and superiority".¹⁶

The race conscious Negro in the United States, for example, generally sympathises with the nationalism of the Africans, with anti-imperialist protests in the Caribbean and with Asian nationalism. Like Du Bois, he senses a spiritual unity and is

15. J.E.T. Philipps: "Pan-Africa and Anti-White", Journal of the Royal African Society, vol. 21, 1921-22, pp.129-135; R.E. Park: Race and Culture (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1950), pp.81-116.

16. W.O. Brown: "The Nature of Race Consciousness" in When Peoples Meet: A Study in Race and Culture Contacts, ed. Alain Locke and Bernhard J. Stern (Hinds, Hayden & Eldredge, N.Y., 1949), pp.523-525.

aware of a common cause of coloured peoples against the white peoples of Western Europe and the United States.

The race idea is an attempt to integrate a community spiritually and politically. It is neither true nor false; it is not a body of knowledge organised in systematic form, but a political idea in the technical sense of the word. It does not purport to describe social reality as it is but is designed to set up symbols whether in the form of language units or more elaborate dogmas which serve to portray the group as a unit. As Voegelin has rightly argued,

"A symbolic idea like the race idea is not a theory in the strict sense of the word. And it is beside the mark to criticize a symbol, or a set of dogmas, because they are not empirically verifiable. While such criticism is correct, it is without meaning, because it is not the function of an idea to describe social reality, but to assist in its constitution the ethical or metaphysical value of an idea does not depend upon its correctness as a picture of social reality. A political idea is not an instrument of cognition. But this does not mean that it has no relation to reality, or that any product of a fertile imagination can serve as a political symbol The symbol is based on an element of reality, but it does not describe reality. It uses the datum in order to represent by means of that single, comparatively simple element a diffuse field of reality as a unit."

Voegelin goes on to state that a scientific analysis ought to avoid heated arguments about the merits of such symbols and to describe realistically their growth and function.¹⁷ This observation must constantly be borne in mind in the study of the history of Pan-Africanism as a utopian thought-style. A distinction must be made, however, between Pan-Negro sentiments, which are generally a movement

17. Eric Voegelin: "The Growth of the Race Idea", The Review of Politics, vol. II, July 1940, pp.283-317.

of ideas and emotions and have not taken organisational or associational form,¹⁸ and Pan-African sentiments which became institutionalised in international and regional organisations.

Pan-Africanism is both a protest, a refusal and a demand. It is a utopia born of centuries of contact with Europe, the most decisive phase of this contact, as far as racial attitudes were concerned, being the African slave trade which dispersed large numbers of African peoples throughout the New World. This historic episode in the history of race relations might be conceptualised either as the African Diaspora (in the Sheppersonian sense)¹⁹ or as "The Pan-African Aggregate" as defined by Bronislaw Malinowski in the cultural anthropological sense.²⁰

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18. St. Clair Drake, Value Systems, Social Structure and Race Relations in the British Isles (University of Chicago Ph.D. thesis, 1954) p.18; Colin Legum: Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide (Praeger, N.Y., 1965), pp.14-15.
 19. Professor Shepperson has argued the thesis of the African Diaspora and its significance for the development of Pan-Africanism and African political thought in several important articles: "Notes on Negro American Influences on The Emergence of African Nationalism", Journal of African History, I, No.2, 1960, pp. 299-312; "Abolitionism and African Political Thought", Transition, 1964, vol. 3, No.12, 1964, pp.22-26; "The African Diaspora - or The African Abroad", African Forum, vol. 2, No.1, 1966, pp. 76-91; "Pan-Africanism and 'pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes", Phylon, Fourth Quarter, 1962, pp.346-358; also George Shepperson and Thomas Price: Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915 (Edinburgh, 1958).
 20. See Bronislaw Malinowski: "The Pan-African Problem of Culture Contact", American Journal of Sociology, XLVIII, No.6, 1943, pp. 649-666. Malinowski's view is that "... all the studies of trans-culturation and inter-racial relationships between Europeans and Africans ought to be placed within the framework of Pan-African theory. The reason for this is that here, as in every comparative research, we ought to consider the widest range of available evidence... But both similarities and differences [i.e. of contact between Africans and others] can be brought into relief only when we have a genuine Pan-African framework of reference."

We are concerned here, however, not with the social anthropological but with the political aspects of the Pan-African Aggregate and attempts to make it an international protest and race movement.²¹ There was little political contact between Africans and New World Negroes at least up to the end of the nineteenth century, although Negro American interest in Africa found expression in Pan-Negro literature, Christian missions and colonisation schemes throughout the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth century; but as a political idea New World Pan-Africanism remained an undefined movement lacking in clear-cut aims.²² Nevertheless, as Maunier has observed, it remained a Pro-Negro movement and overflowed continental boundaries.²³ It was only after the historic Manchester Congress that the new-style Pan-Africanists expressed in positive terms the determination of Negro peoples to organise and unite against the "oppressors" and to make radical Pan-Africanism the ideology of the new liberation movements throughout colonial Africa.

The subject of this study, as we have already explained, has been approached not only from the point of view of political history but also from the point of view of socio-economic analysis and the history of political thought. I have endeavoured, as far as the scope of the study permits, to draw attention to minor but

21. St. Clair Drake, *op.cit.*, p.19.

22. Louis L. Snyder: Race: A History of Modern Ethnic Theories (N.Y., 1939), ch.18, "Pan-Africanism: 'Africa For the Africans'", p.280.

23. Rene Maunier, *op.cit.*, ch. XXXVIII: "Black Autonomism", pp.410-411.

interesting or neglected figures in the history of Pan-Africanism.²⁴ I have also attempted to see the Pan-African movement in the period under review in its widest context, although our main concern is with its West African aspects and the West African participants. Finally, wherever space allows, I have allowed the theoreticians, pamphleteers, prophets and ideologists to speak for themselves, although I have tried to avoid the error of taking their utterances at face value. Yet no account of any movement is complete that does not take account of the ideas, emotions and even fantasies of its leaders - in short, the idees forces ('mental forces') in the evolution of the Pan-African idea.

24. See G.A. Shepperson: "External Factors in the Development of African Nationalism, with Particular Reference to British Central Africa", Phylon, vol. XXII, No.3, Third Quarter, 1961, pp.224-225.

CHAPTER I

NEW WORLD ORIGINS OF PAN-NEGRO SENTIMENT

The nineteenth century not only witnessed a major crisis in race relations: anti-Negro propaganda intensified, and the political, social and economic subjugation of the Negro increased throughout the world. Racialist thinkers, amateurs and apologists of imperial rule took refuge in pseudo-science in elaborate attempts to 'prove' the Negro's alleged inferiority. The voices of the humanitarians, abolitionists and the few white friends of the Negro were virtually drowned by the pretentious outpourings of the anthropologists.¹ Even after emancipation New World Negroes still suffered from the stigma of inferiority and the European colonisation of Africa further served to encourage the perpetuation of this myth.² In this chapter, we shall briefly examine the responses of some of the leaders of the New World Negroes and their attitudes to Africa; we shall also examine the views of the leaders of African thought on the West African end of the African Diaspora. In short, we shall re-state what I have already described as the Sheppersonian thesis of Negro American influences on African nationalism.

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1. Race theory in the history of European ideas can be traced into the eighteenth century; see Jacques Barzun: Race: A Study in Superstition (rev. ed., N.Y., 1965) and P. Curtin: The Image of Africa (London, 1965); also Frederick G. Detweiler: "The Rise of Modern Race Antagonisms", The American Journal of Sociology, 1932, pp.738-747; Frank H. Hawkins: "Race As A Factor in Political Theory" in Charles E. Merriam and Harry Elmer Barnes: A History of Political Theories, Recent Times (N.Y., The Macmillan Company, 1924), pp.508-548.
 2. Hollis R. Lynch: Edward Wilmot Blyden, Pan-Negro Patriot: 1832-1912 (London: O.U.P., 1967), pp.1-3.

We have already mentioned that the African Diaspora was the direct result of the African slave trade which scattered peoples of Negro descent throughout the New World, particularly in the United States, Brazil and the West Indies. From about 1500 to 1900, therefore, Pan-Africanism remained merely an "informal organisation of memories" among articulate members of the Black Diaspora. Negro Americans came to use the word 'African' to describe their churches and other organisations, and Negroes in Brazil and the West Indies retained in varying scales of intensity aspects of their African cultural past. This consciousness of aspects of their African past (depending on the degree of acculturation) generally led New World Negroes either to positively affirm their 'Africanity' or to reject it entirely as a stigma that prevented their assimilation into a predominantly white society.³

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3. There has been much academic controversy over the years as to the nature and significance of African cultural survival in the New World, particularly the U.S.A. The controversy, whose political implications must not be underestimated, was sparked off by Melville Herskovits in The Myth of the Negro Past (N.Y., 1941), which sought to show the extensive persistence of these survivals. Generally, however, it is agreed that with the exception of Brazil, African cultural survivals in America and the West Indies are relatively insignificant. But the controversy has produced much heat: see E. Franklin Frazier: The Negro in the United States (N.Y., The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp.3-21; Gilberto Freyre: The Masters and the Slaves (Tr. Samuel Putnam, 2nd English Language ed., revised Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963); Orlando Patterson The Sociology of Slavery (MacGibbon and Kee, 1967); Jacques Macquet "'Africanity' and 'Americanness'?", Presence Africaine, 1966, vol. 31, No.59, pp.7-15, and the provocative article by Charles Glicksberg, "Negro Americans and the African Dream" in Phylon, 1947, pp.323-330.

(I)

From the early nineteenth century to the end of World War II, three major themes have dominated Negro American attitudes toward Africa - African colonisation schemes, missionary activity and racial Pan-Africanism.⁴ We shall consider these themes in two parts: from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1862, and from the late nineteenth century to 1914.

Toussaint L'Ouverture's successful revolution in Haiti (1804) perhaps provided the first base for pan-Negro consciousness. The fact that former Negro slaves had successfully seized power from their European masters and had indicated their desire to govern themselves meant that Negroes could now at least negatively counter the charge of Negro inferiority and incapacity for self-rule. Even though Haiti failed as an attempt at Negro self-government, Negro Americans continued to show interest in, and even emigrate to, the newly established colony of Sierra Leone. In America itself, the Negro suffered various disabilities, especially in parts of the South where the institution of slavery still existed; his struggle for political freedom, therefore, was paralleled by his interest in colonisation schemes, although there was a tendency before 1850 to see the efforts of the American Colonisation Society (founded in 1817) as a device of slaveholders to rid America of troublesome Negro freemen.⁵

4. St. Clair Drake: "Negro Americans and 'the African Interest'", in ch. 16 of The American Negro Reference Book, ed. John P. Davis (Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1966), p.667.

5. Hollis R. Lynch: "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, before 1862", Boston University Papers on Africa, vol.II, African History, ed. Jeffrey Butler (Boston University Press, 1966), pp.150-153.

From the early decades of the Nineteenth Century onwards, however, a vocal minority among the American Negroes came to the conclusion that the political, social and economic condition of the Negro in America was so hopeless that the only solution to his plight lay in emigration to Haiti, Liberia or Sierra Leone. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 had endangered the very physical security of the Negro. Among this minority of Pan-African nationalists with visions of a regenerated African continent were Paul Cuffee, Lott Cary, Daniel Coker and John Russwurm. Cuffee in 1811 formed the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone to resettle selected Negro Americans there and to promote education in Sierra Leone. In 1815 he again resettled over thirty Negro families in Sierra Leone and co-operated with the American Colonisation Society although he had some reservations about the schemes of the latter body.⁶ Cuffee died shortly after his 1815 trip to Sierra Leone; and Daniel Coker, ex-slave and founder member of the breakaway African Methodist Episcopal Church, sought the support of the Colonisation Society in an attempt to emigrate to West Africa. Coker settled eighty-eight emigrants at Cape Mesurado in Liberia while he himself settled in Sierra Leone. Lott Cary, another ex-slave, went to Liberia as missionary, builder, doctor and above all as mediator between the colonists and the indigenous peoples. He died in November, 1828. John Russwurm, born in Jamaica and one of the

6. Ibid., pp.154-155.

first Negro graduates from an American college, founded and edited the first American Negro newspaper, Freedom's Journal in 1827. He at first opposed the Colonisation Society but later (1829) supported its scheme and went to Liberia in 1830, founding the Liberia Herald the same year. He held various important posts in the Liberian government between 1836 and 1851.

West Indian and American Negroes continued to take interest in emigrating to Liberia when the latter country became independent in 1847. Barbados, for example, had a Fatherland Union Society and a Colonisation Society "for assisting in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the introduction of civilization into Africa", and welcomed Liberia's attainment of independence as proof of the Negro's capacity for self-government. Within the next thirty years, another West Indian, Edward Blyden, was to become the best known defender of the new republic and the most original exponent of Pan-Negro ideas.

Meanwhile in America Martin Delany, a Negro doctor trained at Harvard and an abolitionist was preparing a colonisation scheme with the object of creating a Negro empire in the Caribbean or in South and Central America. Impatient with the white abolitionists and with the slow progress the Negro was making in the matter of civil rights, Delany urged Negro colonisation of South America where a Negro state would hasten the end of slavery in America and establish an economic base for New World Negroes. Delany stated these views in 1852 in an important treatise entitled The Condition, Elevation and Destiny of the Colored People of the

United States, Politically Considered. In it he also criticised Liberia's dependence on the American Colonisation Society which, he suspected, was an agent of slave interests - a view which Blyden rejected. Delany later widened his scheme from mere emigration to the establishment of a Negro nation in East Africa as a means of winning respect for the Negro race. Like the early Zionists, the location of his projected Negro homeland did not matter as long as the oppressed American Negroes could find a place where they could establish themselves as a self-respecting nation. It was only later in his Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party that he spoke of Africa as "our fatherland" and stated that "our policy must be Africa for the African race, and black men to rule them"; black men he defined as "men of African descent who claim an identity with the race".⁷

Delany and his emigrationist friends, however, constituted a minority among the abolitionists, the majority of whom, led by Frederick Douglass, were against any form of Negro emigration. Whereas Delany, supported by Henry Highland Garnet, now turned to West Africa as the 'geographical centre for their pan-Negro programme',⁸ and as an area where cotton could be grown to undersell American slave-grown cotton and thus hasten the collapse of slavery,

7. Howard Brotz ed.,: Negro Social and Political Thought, 1850-1920 (Basic Books, N.Y., 1966), pp.2-3. also A.H.M. Kirk-Greene: "America in the Niger Valley: A Colonization Centenary", Phylon, Third Quarter, 1962, pp.225-239.

8. H.R. Lynch: "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, before 1862", Boston University Papers on Africa, vol. II, African History, ed. Jeffrey Butler (Boston University Press, 1966), p.168.

Douglass and his assimilationist Negro spokesmen argued that the Negro was destined to solve his problems in America and that slavery could only be defeated by Americans in America. In an attack on the African Civilization Society of Garnet and Delany he argued:

The African Civilization Society says to us, go to Africa, raise cotton, civilize the natives, become planters, merchants, compete with the slave States in the Liverpool cotton market, and thus break down American slavery. To which we simply and briefly reply, "we prefer to remain in America"

No one idea has given rise to more oppression and persecution toward the colored people of this country, than that which makes Africa, not America, their home. It is that wolfish idea that elbows us off the side walk, and denies us the rights of citizenship we instinctively shrink from any movement which involves a substitution of a doubtful and indirect issue, for one which is direct and certain..... The African Civilization Society proposes to plant its guns too far from the battlements of slavery for us. Its doctrines and measures are those of doubt and retreat the means for accomplishing our object are quite as promising here as there, and more especially since we are here already, with constitutions and habits suited to the country and its climate, and to its better institutions.⁹

The debate between the pan-Negroists and the assimilationists continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth, culminating in the Garvey movement of the 1920s.

The Rev. Alexander Crummell was perhaps the last major Negro leader with African interests during the period under review. Crummell went to Liberia from America in 1853 after graduating from Queens College, Cambridge, and was associated with Blyden in various reform and race activities in Liberia. In his

9. Howard Brotz, op.cit., pp.263-265.

The Relation and Duties of the Free Colored Men in America to Africa, published in 1861, he supported the emigrationists and stressed the leadership of Negro Americans in the civilisation and christianisation of Africa. He also urged greater Negro participation in African education and commerce and the resulting benefit to both Negro Americans and Africans. Just as James Holly saw the Haitian revolution as a demonstration of the capacity of the Negro for self-government and civilised existence,¹⁰ so did Crummell see the establishment of Liberia as a providential act for the rehabilitation and progress of the Negro by New World Negroes: "without doubt God designs great things for Africa and ... black men themselves are without doubt to be the chief instruments", and like most Pan-African visionaries saw the rise of the Negro republic as the preparation for a new history and civilisation to succeed a declining Anglo-Saxon civilisation.¹¹ As early as 1853, taking Psalm 68, 13 as his text ('Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God') he preached not only the 'mental and spiritual regeneration' of West Indian Negroes but sought to connect this idea with 'another important purpose' - the sending abroad of 'healthful influences and a saving power - even to the benighted father-land, whence the ancestors of the

10. James T. Holly: A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government, and Civilized Progress, as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haitian Revolution; and the Subsequent Act of the People since their National Independence (New Haven, 1857), reprinted in Howard Brotz, op.cit., pp.140-170.

11. Alexander Crummell, quoted in H.R. Lynch, "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, before 1862", Boston University Papers on Africa, vol. II, ed. Jeffrey Butler (Boston University Press, 1966), pp.175, 177.

sable dwellers upon these islands were first brought; and thus help to raise up the great African family, in its several sections, to civilization and enlightenment.'¹² Turning to 'the history of the Cushites, in its African section', Crummell noted that the African diaspora or dispersion had been brought about primarily by two factors - the European Age of Reconnaissance and the Slave Trade, through which Europe established contact with Africa and the New World. As a result of this contact, 'the Negro race is to be found in every quarter of the globe. Stolen from their homes, and reduced to abject vassalage; they are gathered together by thousands and tens of thousands, and even millions, in lands separated, by thousands of miles, from the primitive seat of their ancestors, and the rude hamlets of their sires'. It was therefore with respect to the Negro race, 'as thus scattered through the world, as well as dwelling in their homes in Africa' that he was going to apply the well-known Ethiopian text.¹³ He noted that although slavery had been officially abolished in the British Empire, there were still a few signs of it in Brazil, the United States and in Cuba, but its end was inevitable 'for the commerce of the world is against slavery: the free trade principle of the age is against it: science in her various developments is against it: the literature of the day is just being brought to bear in a most marvellous manner, against it, and the free sentiments of the world are against it ...'

12. Alexander Crummell: Hope for Africa - A Sermon on Behalf of the Ladies' Negro Education Society (London, 1853), p.1.

13. Ibid., p.5.

Crummell then dwelt on the familiar theme of Africans who had 'achieved fame and celebrity' like Anton William Amo, Ignatius Sancho, Job Ben Solomon and, above all, Toussaint L'Ouverture of Haiti, the only successful Negro revolutionary. He took up the cudgels in defence of Haiti against a prejudiced Thomas Carlyle who called the republic 'a tropical dog-kennel and a pestiferous jungle', and asserted that far from being a failure Haiti was an evidence of the progress of the Negro race and that unlike the South American Republics it had not been 'rent asunder by repeated revolutions' but had had only one revolution - that of Toussaint L'Ouverture. As for the strictures of Carlyle, he said that one simply had to endure his 'brutem fulmen' and quietly smile at "the frantic heat, the blind hysterics of that Celt".¹⁴ Finally, Crummell lauded Sierra Leone as 'the cradle of missions, the mother of churches, the parent of colonies' and stated that the movement in the West Indies to send skilled colonists to the West African coast contained 'the germs of a new African nationality of a civilized and Christian type'.¹⁵

14. Ibid., p.10.

15. Ibid., p.14.

(II)

If before 1862 New World Pan-Negro nationalists neither succeeded in initiating a large-scale African colonisation movement nor established significant and permanent contact with Africa,¹⁶ the post Reconstruction period, together with the economic and racial difficulties of Southern Negroes, created a situation in which internal migration or colonisation seemed the only alternatives to a large number of Negro Americans. The period roughly from 1878 to 1914 - from the Kansas Exodus of 1879 to utopian attempts to found an all-Negro community in Oklahoma Territory in the 1890's and the Chief Sam 'African Movement' of 1914-1915 - can perhaps be said to mark the zenith of the emigrationist ideology and of Negro American identification with Africa.¹⁷ There were indeed Negro leaders who opposed emigration to Africa: in fact, the majority of Negro leaders opposed the idea and opted for the integrationist philosophy. A very articulate minority, led by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the A.M.E. Church, consistently and actively preached the emigrationist ideology, while somewhere in the middle was another group sympathetic to the establishment of a 'Christian Negro Nationality' in Africa

16. H.R. Lynch: "Pan-Negro Nationalism in the NewWorld, before 1862", op.cit., p.178.

17. In its efforts to alleviate the economic hardships of the Negro, The Kansas African Emigration Association in 1887 proposed the establishment of a "United States of Africa ... for the elevation of the African and for the perpetuity of our race, which is here losing its identity by intermixture". Quoted in August Meier: Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp.65, 67.

through commerce and limited voluntary emigration. This last group was led by Bishop Arnett and T. McCants Stewart. The most consistent, articulate and pro-African among the emigrationists, however, was the controversial Bishop Turner, whose Pan-Negroism and support for Ethiopianism took him to South and West Africa.¹⁸

Henry McNeal Turner was born in South Carolina and was largely self-taught. He was appointed the first Negro army chaplain during the Civil War, after which he entered politics in Georgia. In 1868 when the Negro members of that legislature were expelled by the whites, Turner turned to the church, becoming a bishop in the American Methodist Episcopal Church in 1880. In 1874 he and Bishop Jabez P. Campbell of the A.M.E. church espoused the emigration idea and became officials of the American Colonisation Society. Turner's view was that there was no future for the Negro in America; like James Holly, his emigrationist theory was blended with that of 'Providential design'. He argued that God had brought the Negro to America to be Christianised and civilised so that he could return to Africa and develop the continent. Indeed, so deep-seated was his hatred of Anglo-Saxon America that he wished it 'nothing but ill and endless misfortune' and to see it 'go down to ruin and its memory blotted from the pages of history'.¹⁹ And as late as 1901 he wrote in

18. The 'Back-to-Africa' movements from 1890 to 1910, in which Bishop Turner figures, are being studied by Mr. E.S. Redkey of Yale University. See his article "Bishop Turner's African Dream", The Journal of American History (formerly The Mississippi Valley Historical Review), vol. LIV, No. 2, Sept. 1967, pp. 271-290.

19. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, quoted in August Meier, op.cit., p. 66.

his journal Voice of the People:

"The Negro race has as much chance in the United States ... of being a man ... as a frog has in a snake den ... Emigrate and gradually return to the land of our ancestors ... The Negro was brought here in the providence of God to learn obedience, to work, to sing, to pray, to preach, acquire education, deal with mathematical abstractions and imbibe the principles of civilization as a whole, and then to return to Africa, the land of his fathers, and bring her his millions"20

Bishop Turner was not only concerned with Pan-Negro nationalism and African colonisation; he took a deep and passionate interest in its ecclesiastical counterpart, Ethiopianism. He encouraged the establishment of A.M.E. churches both in Sierra Leone and Liberia, staffed by Negro pastors and was in direct touch with the leaders of the Ethiopian movement in South Africa in the 1890s, his Voice of Missions reaching many parts of the continent. Much of the Ethiopian agitation in South Africa was inspired by Negro American missions, notably Turner's A.M.E. church; in fact, Turner visited South Africa in March, 1898, where he made several public speeches, consecrated African bishops and denounced slavery and racism.²¹

In contrast to Bishop Turner, T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the New York Age and New York World as well as one of the most

20. Ibid., quoted in St. Clair Drake, "Negro Americans and "The African Interest", The American Negro Reference Book, ed. John P. Davis (Prentice-Hall: New Jersey, 1966), p.674.

21. For details of Turner's activities in South Africa and his relations with the leaders of the Ethiopian movement there see Amos Burnet "Ethiopianism", Church Missionary Review, 1922, pp.29-34; M. Leenhardt: Le Mouvement Ethiopien Au Sud de l'Afrique de 1896 a 1899 (Cahors, 1902), pp.28-64, and D. Thwaite: The Seething African Pot: A Study of Black Nationalism, 1882-1935 (Constable & Co. Ltd., London, 1936), pp.25-57.

articulate anti-emigrationists and advocates of Negro participation in politics, argued that the Negro, especially the Southern Negro, was in the United States to stay and that it was the duty of white America to educate him to exercise his rights as a citizen:

The talk about the black people being brought to this country to prepare themselves to evangelise Africa is so much religious nonsense boiled down to a sycophantic platitude. The Lord, who is eminently just, had no hand in their forcible coming here Africa will have to be evangelized from within, not from without. The Colonization society has spent mints of money and tons of human blood in the selfish attempt to plant an Anglo-African colony on the West Coast of Africa. The money has been thrown away and the human lives have been sacrificed in vain. The black people of this country are Americans, not Africans; and any wholesale expatriation of them is altogether out of the question.²²

Turner and Fortune were to express divergent views again, this time at a conference on Africa sponsored by the Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta in 1895 which was attended by Alexander Crummell who spoke on the need for indigenous missions in Africa and by the Rev. Orishatukeh Faduma from Sierra Leone, who will be considered later. At that conference, Turner re-stated his emigrationist philosophy more vigorously, the only concession he made being that not all Negroes, but two or three million should return to Africa:

"There is no manhood future in the United States for the Negro. He may eke out an existence for generations to come, but he can never be a man Upon this point I know thousands who make pretentions to scholarship, white and colored, will differ and may charge me with folly, while I in turn pity their ignorance of history and political and

22. T. Thomas Fortune, "Solution of the Political Problem", quoted in Howard Brotz, op.cit., p.349.

civil sociology the argument that it would be impossible to transport the colored people of the United States back to Africa is an advertisement of folly...."23

Fortune, on the other hand, reiterated his assimilationist theory in a paper on "The Nationalization of Africa". He did not talk of African nations or of African nationalism: by 'nationlization' he meant the colonisation and partition of Africa by Europe and the inevitable transference to Africa of European concepts of statehood. He predicted that by 1979 the whole of Africa would, through European colonisation, be Europeanised 'physically and mentally and morally', and that 'the demoralizing heterogeneousness which now prevails over the whole continent will give place to a pervading homogeneity in language, in religion, and in government'. Having said this he went on to state his 'iron law' of the eventual assimilation or 'nationalization' of the European minority in Africa, observing that just as the Negro was being assimilated into the American society and culture in spite of the resistance of the whites and a few Negroes, "The rigid laws and rules and regulations already adopted by the English, the Germans and the French and the Belgians in Africa to keep the natives in their place will prove as ineffectual to their purpose as such laws and rules and regulations now prove in the United States"24

23. Bishop H.M. Turner: "The American Negro and the Fatherland", in Africa and the American Negro: Congress on Africa, ed. J.W.E. Bowen (Atlanta, 1896), pp.195-198.

24. T. Thomas Fortune: "The Nationalization of Africa", J.W.E. Bowen, op.cit., pp.199-204.

Fortune, however, does not seem to have been unaware of a wider unity of Negro peoples, for he later claimed that the idea of the Pan-African Conference of 1900 was his.²⁵ That first of Pan-African conclaves was convened in London at Westminster Town-hall by a Trinidad barrister practising in London, Henry Sylvester Williams. Williams, about whom little is known so far, is believed to have introduced the concept of Pan-Africanism. He was assisted by Bishop Alexander Walters of the American Methodist Episcopal Zion Church,²⁶ who was also the president of the National Afro-American Council. According to current newspaper reports, the conference was organized by a committee of the African Association in London to discuss the Native Races Question. The African Association, formed by students in London during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, also included members from the West Indies, West Africa, South Africa, and white supporters like Mrs. Cobden-Unwin (daughter of the Free Trade champion Richard Cobden), Mrs. Colenso and Dr. Colenso, and Bishop Creighton of London. Its constitution aimed:

To encourage a feeling of unity, to facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans in general; to promote and protect the interest of all subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British Colonies and other places, especially in Africa, by circulating accurate information on all subjects affecting their rights and privileges as subjects of the British Empire, and by direct appeals to the Imperial and local Governments.²⁷

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25. Eliot M. Rudwick, W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership (Philadelphia, 1960), p.209.
26. Bishop Walters later described the 1900 Pan-African Conference in his My Life and Work (N.Y., 1917), pp.253-264.
27. See The Times, 24/7/1900, p.7; 'Pan-African Conference'; The Gold Coast Leader, 31/8/1912, p.5; The Lagos Standard, 17/10/1900: 'The Pan-African Conference'.

The conference, which was also attended by Du Bois, lasted from July 23rd to the 25th, with Bishop Walters in the chair. Walters remarked on the uniqueness of this Pan-African conclave and spoke of the Negro's struggle for social and political rights in America, suggesting that a bureau should be created in London to act as a pressure group in influencing all legislation affecting non-European races. A delegate from Kansas (U.S.A.) spoke on the preservation of race individuality, while Mr. Benito Sylvian (an officer in the Haitian navy and aide-de-camp to the Emperor Menelik) read a paper on "The Necessary Concord to be Established between Native Races and European Colonists", commenting on the regressive colonial policy adopted towards the close of the nineteenth century and on the 'most frightful deeds of colonising companies'. Negroes, he said, had everywhere proved themselves worthy of liberty and the question of the day was going to be whether Europe was prepared to come to an understanding with the Negro, for "No human power could stop the African natives in their social and political development". The Bishop of London urged restraint and spoke on human brotherhood and the inevitable contacts between races and its resulting problems.

On July 25th and 26th the conference discussed "The progress of our people in the light of current history", and the South African war. Pro-African speeches were made by F.S.R. Johnston, a former Attorney-General of Liberia, Mr. Meyer and Dr. R. Akinande Savage, delegates from the Afro-West Indian

Literary Society of Edinburgh, and D. Tobias who in a discussion on "Africa, the sphinx of history", claimed that civilisation began with the Negro. G.W. Christian (Dominica), whose speech was widely quoted in the British West African press, spoke on the South African question and on Rhodesia, urging greater attention to the welfare and liberty of the African in South Africa after the settlement of the war. And Sylvester Williams, who had visited South Africa, condemned racial segregation and recommended a protest movement against it. Then the conference, aided by Du Bois, drew up an address to the world which they sent to various governments and to Queen Victoria. The address condemned the exploitation of subject peoples and admonished:

Let not the cloak of Christian missionary enterprise be allowed in the future, as so often in the past, to hide the ruthless economic exploitation and political downfall of less developed nations whose chief fault has been reliance on the plighted troth of the Christian Church.

It was also at that conference that Du Bois made his prophetic remark to the effect that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line".²⁸

The Pan-African Association, formed after the 1900 Conference, started a paper called The Panafrican in 1901, edited by H. Sylvester Williams, of which probably only one issue appeared. According to Dr. Geiss, some of the members attempted to dissolve

28. The proceedings of the 1900 Conference can be found in The Times, 24/7/1900, p.7, 25/7/1900, p.15, 26/7/1900, p.11; The Anti-Slavery Reporter, Aug. - Oct. 1900, pp.139-141; Bulletin du Comite de l'Afrique Franciase, 1900, pp.283-284; 'Le Panafricanisme'; and South Africa, 28/7/1900, vol.XLVII, No.602, p.197: 'Pan-African Conference'. I owe the last reference to Mr. Neil Parsons. For the 'Address to the Nations of the World' see Alexander Walters, op.cit., pp.257-260.

the Association after the Conference but it was revived by Bishop Walters and Sylvester Williams. In less than a year the Association, together with its ambitious programme, passed into oblivion.²⁹ But contemporaries, particularly the budding nationalists in West Africa, gave wide coverage to the 1900 Conference and were optimistic about its potentialities. The Lagos Standard, for example, observed:

The last year of the present century will long be memorable to all people of African descent for an event in the history of race movements, which for its importance and probable results, so far as its aims and objects are concerned, is perhaps without parallel. The unprecedented spectacle of a Conference of members of the Negro race gathered together in the world's Metropolis, discussing their wrongs and pleading for justice for the race, is sufficiently striking to attract public attention in an unusual degree.....

The Lagos Standard also endorsed G.W. Christian's speech calling for greater autonomy in the colonies.³⁰ In the Gold Coast, the Gold Coast Aborigines lamented:

The feverish rush for plunder and division of Africa is about to be, if not already, consummated on this eventful eve of the Twentieth Century. The saying 'Rule Africa for the African' is but the reverse of 'Rule Africa for self' on the sheer principle of aggrandizement. If only the blackman would be more alive to his interest and make a couple of strides towards the goal of advancement things would be different.³¹

The editorial viewed the Pan-African conference in the context of a colonial policy which was becoming more reactionary, and in the

29. Imanuel Geiss: "The Development of Panafricanism in the Twentieth Century", p.6, paper read at a seminar in the Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University, June, 1966.

30. The Lagos Standard, 17/10/1900: 'The Pan-African Conference'.

31. The Gold Coast Aborigines, 31/8/1900, p.3.

context of the anti-foreign Boxer Rebellion in China, and added prophetically and in anticipation of modern Pan-Africanists:

The insolent whites thought that China was dead, but they now find her very much alive. The same will be found true with the blacks. They are not going to die out. We predict that Africa will always remain what it has always been - the black man's continent. There may be fringes of population of whites here and there, but the main bulk of the people will be black. We talk of Boer and Briton in South Africa, as if that were a statement of the whole matter. What if, at some distant date in the future, South Africa should belong neither to Boer nor Briton, but to the negro - his by right, by superior numbers, and superior power? We may smile at the idea, but it may easily become a tremendous reality.

..... The old slavery is dead, but a more subtle if not more cruel slavery may take its place. The demand of the capitalist everywhere is for cheap and docile labour Hence the China crisis, hence the danger to the blacks of Africa. We have little to be thankful for to men like Rhodes. But we may thank him for exposing his designs and so warning the negro race of the evils in store for them if he and his like are to bear sway

Now the negro must be protected against this insidious conspiracy. But that protection must largely depend on himself. We can help him; but he must in the main work out his own salvation, as all men have had to do since history began.³²

The Gold Coast Chronicle too was affected by the new spirit. It vehemently defended the right of the press to 'vindicate the cause of the oppressed' and to 'point out and express freely our opinion on the conduct of the Government when it is associated with evils and grievances detrimental to public interests', and roundly declared:

..... WE ARE NO LONGER CHILDREN. The absurdity of the idea that, we shall be afraid in the least to point out to the Government what would contribute to the public weal needs no comment.³³

32. Ibid., part of the editorial was a reprint from Reynolds' Newspaper, 29/7/1900.

33. The Gold Coast Chronicle, 18/8/1900, p.3. The Gold Coast delegate to the 1900 Pan-African Conference was A.F. Ribero, a barrister.

This growing African consciousness of a wider racial unity was, as we have noted, influenced both by indigenous factors and by outside influences, so that even before 1919 a few Africans were directing their attention to the question of race development and solidarity. For example, P. Isaka Seme, an American educated South African and one of the founders of the South African National Congress wrote on "The Regeneration of Africa",³⁴ while Bandele Omoyini, a Nigerian student at Edinburgh University, thought it proper to write a book entitled Defence of the Ethiopian Movement in 1908, and S.R.B. Attoh-Ahuma and Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast and Edward Blyden of Liberia wrote several important works on the subject of cultural and Pan-Negro nationalism.

More encouragement was given to this Pan-Negro consciousness by the two inter-racial gatherings of 1911 and 1912 - the Universal Races Congress and Booker T. Washington's mini-pan-African conference of 1912. The first congress, held in London, was an international seminar on race relations 'to discuss in the light of science and the modern conscience the general relations subsisting between the peoples of the West and those of the East, between so-called white and so-called coloured peoples, with a view to encouraging between them a fuller understanding, the most friendly feelings, and a heartier co-operation';³⁵ but for a few articulate Africans it was regarded as a major gathering which

34. G. Shepperson: "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism", Journal of African History, I, 2, 1960, p. 304, footnote 36; also N.E. Cameron: The Evolution of the Negro, vol. I ('The Argosy' Company Ltd., Georgetown, Demerara: 1929), pp. 190-196.

35. See Gustav Spiller: Inter-Racial Problems (London, 1911), p. v.

had at last established the equality of races.³⁶ Majola Agbebi, director of the Niger Delta Mission, who spoke at the congress, rejected the current view that the African was a child and observed that the object of the congress was to foster mutual respect and knowledge between Eastern and Western peoples and that "The triumph of the principles for which the Congress stands will go a long way towards the solution of the African problem." G.K. Gokhale, president of the Indian National Congress also referred to "the monstrous indignities and ill-treatment" meted out to Indians in South Africa. For most European liberals, however, the congress was regarded as a major step towards understanding with Asia, particularly Japan, and Germany whose relations with Britain had deteriorated to a point where conflict between the two was generally regarded as inevitable.³⁷

The London Inter-Racial Congress was followed by Booker T. Washington's International Conference on the Negro at Tuskegee

36. See, for example, J.E. Casely Hayford's 'An Open Letter to Dr. G. Spiller, Organiser of the First Universal Races Congress' in the African Times and Orient Review, August, 1913, p.67. The pan-coloured African Times and Orient Review was edited by a neglected figure in the history of Pan-Negro nationalism, the part Sudanese, part Egyptian Duse Mohamed Ali (1867-1945) who was associated at different times with Pan-Negro and African nationalist groups and finally chaired a meeting in Nigeria at which Zik's N.C.N.C. was founded. The Gold Coast Leader, 13/8/1912, saw Duse Mohamed Ali's paper as the continuation of the efforts of Henry Sylvester Williams and the Pan-African Association he founded in 1900, while a modern student of Pan-Africanism (Dr. Imanuel Geiss, op.cit., p.7) has described his journal as 'a journalistic forerunner of the Bandung movement'. The life and pan-African activities of Duse Mohamed Ali is the subject of a doctoral thesis by Mr. Ian Duffield of Edinburgh University.

37. The Rt. Hon. Lord Avebury: "Inter-Racial Problems", The Fortnightly Review, vol. XC, New Ser., July-Dec. 1911, pp.581-589.

on April 17-19, 1912. Over a hundred delegates attended, the majority representing various Negro American missionary bodies, with less than a dozen African delegates. Missionary work and the role of Negro educational institutions featured prominently in the discussions, as well as a growing awareness of Pan-African thinking. Blyden was unable to attend because of his diplomatic work but sent the conference a letter in which he declared his support for its goals; the Rev. Mark C. Hayford gave a lengthy and interesting address as well as a letter from his brother J.E. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast.

The 1912 Tuskegee Conference on Africa discussed the methods of missionary activity in Africa: how were they to teach the French Africans and could they teach skills to the African in South Africa without antagonising the whites? At the end of the conference both white and black missionaries thrashed out the question and agreed to invite Washington to visit South Africa to seek a working basis whereby Negro American missionaries could play their part in the development of the country.³⁸ Perhaps this question became more urgent because of the presence of Pan-African oriented Negro missions at the conference led by Bishop H.M. Turner whom a press release described as one of the 'stormy Negro orators the well-known apostle of the Back-to-Africa movement which is the lost cause of the Negro race ...'³⁹ Obviously the good Bishop was not satisfied with a programme for

38. Robert M. Park (ex-secretary of the Congo Reform Association in America): "Tuskegee International Conference on the Negro", Journal of Race Development, vol. 3, July 1912 - Apr. 1913, pp.118-119.

39. See St. Clair Drake: "Negro Americans and "The African Interest"", op.cit., p.684, footnote 45.

the redemption of Africa that lacked the flavour of a radical Pan-Negroism. It was precisely this 'subversion' that the Hampton-Tuskegee approach to Africa was determined to avoid. In fact, the conference showed Booker Washington not as the Negro isolationist leader his rivalry with Du Bois led observers to think he was, but as one whose approach to racial solidarity was based on political realism and a preference for technical and educational development of Africa.⁴⁰ For example, at the conference a scheme was worked out for promoting trade between Negro America and West Africa, and the Africa Union Company was formed for this purpose but the Great War interrupted and the idea was abandoned.⁴¹ It has been argued that Casely Hayford changed his views about the unsuitability of Negro Americans for political leadership in Africa because of his agreement with the ideas of Washington's Tuskegee Conference.⁴² He agreed with Washington precisely because of the a-political nature of the Hampton-Tuskegee approach to the 'regeneration' of Africa - an arrangement which would leave nationalist agitation in the hands of the West African bourgeois nationalists while enabling them to enjoy the benefits of Pan-Negro transatlantic commerce and

40. Louis R. Harlan: "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden", The American Historical Review, vol. LXXI, No.2, Jan. 1966, pp.441-467.

41. It seems to have been revived, in 1923, with Duse Mohamed Ali as its president, under the title of the American African Oriental Trading Company; see Duse Mohamed Ali to Dr.R.R.Moton, Principal, Tuskegee Institute, 19/2/1923 and interview with Duse Mohamed Ali published in the St. Louis Clarion, 19/10/1923. I owe this information to Professor G.A. Shepperson.

42. G. Shepperson: "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism", op.cit., p.311, footnote 87.

educational co-operation. It is more likely that his strictures in Ethiopia Unbound were directed against the political messianism and crusading spirit of New World Pan-Negroists who had exalted notions about civilising and leading a 'benighted' Africa. Those groups were potentially subversive and did not fit in with the views and interests of constitutional nationalists and conservative Pan-Africanists of West Africa. It is therefore not surprising to find Casely Hayford praising the efforts of the Tuskegee Conference on the one hand and on the other hand reminding the conference that there existed such a thing as an 'African Nationality'.⁴³ As we shall show in subsequent chapters, the attitude of the West African nationalist leadership to the Pan-African movements of the 1920's was deeply influenced by this dualism.

(III)

AFRICAN RESPONSES

African political thinking, ecclesiastical and cultural nationalism drew inspiration from several sources, some of them as in the case of the Ethiopian movement, indigenous. Exactly what the extent of these influences was is problematical,⁴⁴ although there is general agreement as to their significance in

43. See Robert M. Park: "Tuskegee International Conference on the Negro", op.cit., pp.117-118.

44. G. Shepperson: "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism", op.cit., p.312.

the evolution of Pan-African and nationalist thought and politics. New World Pan-Negro literature and Abolitionist literature were utilised by race-conscious African writers during the early part of the nineteenth century, but as that century drew to a close specifically African contributions beginning with the cultural nationalism of Edward Blyden began to appear, particularly in the writings and journalistic efforts of West African nationalists.⁴⁵ What were these influences and what was the African response?

The origins of the concept of self-government for Negro peoples can be traced to the emancipationist categories of thought in Abolitionist literature during the campaign for the abolition of slavery and in the establishment of Sierra Leone and Liberia. So closely connected were these three major events with the beginnings of Negro self-assertion that a writer has argued that "... it is no exaggeration to say that much of the work of the emerging African political thinkers of the Abolitionist Epoch centres on the issue of racialism".⁴⁶ Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton of Sierra Leone, for example, utilised anti-slavery literature in his West African Countries and Peoples: A Vindication of the African Race (1868) and in his Political Economy of British Western Africa the African view of the Negro's place in

45. See Robert W. July: "Nineteenth Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden", Journal of African History, v.I, 1964, pp.73-86; Robert W. July: The Origins of Modern African Thought (Faber and Faber, 1968), passim; George W. Ellis: "Liberia in the Political Psychology of West Africa", Journal of the Royal African Society, vol. 12, 1912-13, pp.55-56.

46. G. Shepperson: "Abolitionism and African Political Thought", Transition, vol. 3, No.12, 1964, p.23.

nature (1865).⁴⁷ Much of the writings of Africans and New World Negroes on Pan-Negroism owed their inspiration to abolitionist literature, notably the Abbe Henri Gregoire's pro-African An enquiry concerning the intellectual and moral faculties and literature of negroes: followed with an account of the life and work of fifteen negroes and mulattoes, distinguished in science, literature and the arts (1810) and Wilson Armistead's A Tribute for the Negroe: being a vindication of the moral, intellectual, and religious capabilities of the coloured portion of Mankind; with particular reference to the African race (1848). In particular, Abolitionist literature on the 'noble savage' and sometimes idyllic references to the 'Negro Heritage' indirectly influenced the political thinking and attitudes of West Africans such as the William James Davies of Sierra Leone who changed his name to Orishatukeh Faduma and later expressed ideas similar to those of Blyden; D.B. Vincent of Nigeria who became Mojola Agbebi, the Ghanaian S.R.B. Solomon who became Attoh Ahuma. Emancipationist literature may also have stimulated the Pan-Africanism of one of West Africa's leading nationalist thinkers, J.E. Casely Hayford.⁴⁸

47. For details see Robert W. July: The Origins of Modern African Thought, op.cit., pp.112-129; Robert W. July: "Africanus Horton and the Idea of Independence in West Africa", Sierra Leone Studies, New Ser., No.18, Jan. 1966, pp.2-17.

48. G. Shepperson: "Abolitionism and African Political Thought", op.cit., pp.24-25; for discussion of the ideas of S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma and Casely Hayford see Robert W. July, op.cit., pp.341-344, 433-457. Some of the ideas of the Rev. Orishatukeh Faduma are discussed in chapters 2-4 of this thesis.

More direct contact between Negro Americans and Africans between the end of the nineteenth century and the post-1918 period led to a greater 'commerce of ideas'. For example, future South African nationalist leaders like John L. Dube, Sol Plaatje, P. Isaka Seme and D.D.T. Jabavu were educated in Negro American colleges; so was John Chilembwe, leader of the 1915 Nyasaland uprising, and Pan-Negroists like John Edward Bruce were able to establish contact with leading West Africans such as Casely Hayford, J.E.K. Aggrey, Mojola Agbebi and W.E.G. Sekyi.⁴⁹ On the political level Negro American Pan-Negroists prepared the ground for the future Pan-African gatherings both in their propaganda for post-war reconstruction in Africa and America and in their writings on the desirability of world-wide Negro unity. James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. Du Bois, officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, drew attention to the significance of the Great War for Negro self-determination and reconstruction both in America and in Africa. Another Negro scholar Benjamin Brawley, whose Africa and the War (1918) was widely commented on in French and English journals concerned with African questions, asserted that 'The great war of our day is to determine the future of the Negro in the World. Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, the Balkans, and even Russia all become second in importance'.⁵⁰ Similarly, Lewis Garnett Jordan, Foreign Missionary

49. G. Shepperson: "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism", op.cit., pp.309-310.

50. Quoted in Shepperson, op.cit., p.308.

Secretary of the Negro American National Baptist Convention, wrote in 1918:

With 600,000 Africans fighting in the trenches with the allies and an equal number in arms in various parts of Africa under governments who have taken over the continent, it can never be hoped to again make the African a docile creature, to be dumb and driven like a brute, which his oppressors have been 100 years or more in the making.⁵¹

Finally, radical Pan-Africanists such as Hubert Harrison, founder of the Liberty League of Negro Americans, journalist and one of Marcus Garvey's staunchest supporters, helped to usher in the post-1918 Pan-African movement in their polemics and ideological treatises on the subject. Harrison, for example, published in 1920 a tract entitled When Africa Awakes: the 'inside story' of the stirrings and strivings of the new Negro in the western world,⁵² in which he criticised Du Bois and the American Socialist Party, and preached the 'race first' philosophy for Negroes. He welcomed Europe's 'fratricidal strife' as an opportunity for the non-white races to achieve political freedom:

We look for a free India and an independent Egypt; for nationalities in Africa flying their own flags and dictating their own internal and foreign policies. This is what we understand by "making the world safe for democracy". Anything less than this will fail to establish "peace on earth and good will toward men". For the majority of races cannot be eternally coerced into accepting the sovereignty of the white race So, gentlemen, when you read of the Mullah, of Said Zaghloul Pasha and of Marcus Garvey or Casely Hayford; when you hear of Egyptian and

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51. Lewis Garnett Jordan: Pebbles from an African Beach (Philadelphia, 1918), quoted in Shepperson, op.cit., p.308; cf. S.C. Davis: Reservoirs of Men: A History of the Black Troops of French West Africa (Chambery, 1934), pp.165, 191.
52. New York, Porro press, 1920, 146 pp. Was it called 'Porro' press because of the conspiratorial nature of 'porro'?

Indian nationalist uprisings, of Black Star Lines and West Indian "seditions" - kindly remember (because we know) that these fruits spring from the seeds of your own sowing.⁵³

Another American Negro also published a Pan-African tract, A Plea for Unity Among American Negroes and the Negroes of the World (1918). Barrett called for Negro American unity under a National Negro Political Party but linked this to a wider unity of coloured peoples:

For while the problems - economic, social, educational and political - of Negroes outside America may differ locally and otherwise from those of the American Negro, still, in the main, their problems are not much different from ours, hence, the necessity of a world wide Negro organization After all, the problem which will confront us in the future and indeed all of the world's darker races, will be the problem of colored men - Negroes, Japanese, and East Indians - receiving a "square deal" in a world dominated financially and generally by a white minority.⁵⁴

In West Africa itself there was a corresponding ferment of political and cultural ideas. The best known exponents of these ideas were Edward Blyden and his disciple J.E. Casely Hayford whose writings did much to lay the foundations of the theory of Negritude and the philosophy of African unity. Blyden's ideas have been ably dealt with in detail and need not detain us;⁵⁵ we

53. Ibid., pp.97-98.

54. Samuel Barrett: A Plea for Unity Among American Negroes and the Negroes of the World (3rd edition, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1926), p.3. The first edition was in 1918, sixth edition in 1946; see St. Clair Drake: "Negro Americans and "The African Interest"", op.cit., p.696.

55. In particular by Hollis R. Lynch: Edward Wilmot Blyden, Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912 (London, O.U.P., 1967); Edith Holden: Blyden of Liberia: An Account of the Life and Labors of Edward Wilmot Blyden, As Recorded in Letters and in Print (Vantage Press, N.Y., 1966); Robert W. July: "Nineteenth Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden", Journal of African History, v,I, 1964, pp.73-86; Robert W. July: The Origins of Modern African Thought, op.cit., pp.208-223.

are mainly concerned here with their point of departure from New World Pan-Negro thinking. Blyden, as Dr. Lynch has told us, was more African oriented culturally, more universal in his treatment of Negro questions and at the same time more specifically concerned with the idea of a West African community of culture. While Negro Americans vaguely theorised about a Pan-African utopia, Blyden in his activities and in his writings sought to establish the pan-West African idea in practice. Dr. Lynch has argued persuasively that the idea of West African political integration, from Casely Hayford's National Congress of British West Africa to attempts at unification by French and English-speaking political leaders in the early 1960's, is not a twentieth-century phenomenon but has its origins in the social and political thought of Edward Blyden. His qualified encouragement of European imperialism in West Africa, his encouragement of Liberian expansion, and his championing of Islam and Arabic and of Negro history and culture were all calculated to foster ethnocentrism in West Africa and the idea of a West African community transcending tribal, religious and possibly, territorial divisions created by the colonising Powers.⁵⁶ Similarly, Blyden's interest in the creation of a West African university, his support for a united West African Church and his encouragements of the local elites to use their wealth for 'constructive purposes' - all these were designed to encourage self-knowledge, a spirit of unity, and self-respect. As far as is known, he was the first African thinker to preach the philosophy

56. Hollis R. Lynch: "Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist", Journal of African History, VI, 3, 1965, pp.373-388.

of an 'African Personality'.⁵⁷ Blyden failed as a practical leader, and the majority of his contemporaries disagreed with some of his more controversial views and with his non-political approach, but his ideas profoundly influenced the liberal nationalism and Pan-African outlook of two of his disciples, J.E. Casely Hayford and the Rev. Orishatukeh Faduma and the majority of the leaders of the pan-West African movement of the 1920's. In a very real sense, therefore, Edward Blyden was the 'ideological father of the idea of West African unity'.⁵⁸

Of Casely Hayford it can be said that the central theme of his political philosophy was unity - unity among the Gold Coast people, unity in West Africa, and unity of the coloured races. Like Blyden he saw himself as a prophet and race leader and like Blyden the concept of a United West Africa was the keystone of his race and political thinking. Unlike Blyden, however, he was more positively committed to political action for the realisation of his goals. Only a year after Blyden's death Casely Hayford was criticising the slavish imitation of European civilisation and preaching West African nationalism and unity:

You cannot think great thoughts in Africa by adopting wholesale the hurry and the bustle and the way of life of the European. Nature did not intend it. Those who attempt it end in trouble. Nay, worse. It means death. For even the dual man cannot serve God and Mammon. And no worse burden could be imposed by civilisation on African nationality than the burden of the double life Nonconformity is a great thing We want badly in West Africa the spirit of honest protest. We want personalities who will dare to lead

57. For details see Hollis R. Lynch: Edward Blyden, op.cit., ch.10: "Towards a West African Community", pp.170-247.

58. Ibid., pp.248-252.

the people back to real life to aim at truth in the life of the people is the basis of national consciousness We should like to feel that one tocsin call can arouse West Africa into national consciousness. What is it that bridges creeds and dogmas, tribes and prejudices, as broad culture? I bid you shake hands across the waters over your common need, your common trouble, your common anxiety And United West Africa rises chastened and stimulated by the thought that in union is her strength, her weakness in discord.⁵⁹

He indicted the undemocratic nature of colonial rule and the perversion of traditional institutions for the purposes of imperial rule. Like the leaders of most pan-movements he attributed a spiritual world role to his race and saw West Africa as the vanguard of a Pan-African movement, but as we have stated, he tempered this race consciousness with political moderation and a recognition of the benefits of British rule. On the one hand he embraced the Pan-Africanism of New World Negroes but on the other he emphasised the difference between the race consciousness of Booker T. Washington and Du Bois and that of Edward Blyden, which he preferred.⁶⁰ As early as 1911 he held the view that Negro Americans, as a result of their assimilation into American culture, were disqualified from assuming the role of political mentors to an awakened Africa:

The voice that was aforetime crying solitarily in the wilderness has suddenly become the voice of a nation and of a people, calling upon their kindred across the Atlantic to come back to their way of thinking. We notice with a pang the strivings after the wind in which our brethren in America are engaged, and we ask them to-day to return to first principles and to original and racial conceptions -

59. J.E. Casely Hayford: The Truth About the West African Land Question (London, 1913), pp.101-103.

60. J.E. Casely Hayford: Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation (London, 1911), pp.163-164.



to those cooling streams by the fountains of Africa which would refresh their souls.

To leave no possible doubt as to my meaning, Afro-Americans must bring themselves into touch with some of the general traditions and institutions of their ancestors, and, though sojourning in a strange land, endeavour to conserve the characteristics of the race. Thus, and only thus, like Israel of old, will they be able, metaphorically, to walk out of Egypt in the near future with a great and a real spoil.⁶¹

In Casely Hayford's view, this was a 'new conception of nationalisms', different from the one put forward by the Negro American school of thought. Even the new African historiography started in America and the new interest in African culture was anticipated by Casely Hayford when he suggested the study of African institutions and traditions by Negro Americans, for the Negro American, he said, "has lost absolute touch with the past of his race, and is helplessly and hopelessly groping in the dark for affinities that are not natural." "Looking at the matter closely", he concluded, "it is not so much Afro-Americans that we want as Africans or Ethiopians"⁶² Indeed, Casely Hayford went so far as to suggest that the Pan-African initiative must come from 'cultured West Africans'.⁶³

Before the outbreak of the Great War, then, Pan-Negro thinking had evolved from its origins in the New World to a point where it began to assume a distinctively African orientation in Africa. It is this African aspect in the evolution of the Pan-African idea that we shall examine in detail in from chapter 2 onwards.

61. Ibid., p.166.

62. Ibid., p.173. As we shall show in Chapter 2, similar views were expressed by the West African nationalist intelligentsia in relation to the Garvey movement, and by W.E.G. Sekyi in The Parting of the Ways.

63. J.E. Casely Hayford, op.cit., pp.174-182, 196-197; see also Robert W. July, op.cit., pp.448-450.

CHAPTER II

THE 'AFRICAN MOVEMENT' AND THE PAN AFRICAN MOVEMENT: 1914-1927:

The death of Edward W. Blyden in 1912 can be taken as a convenient, though arbitrary, date to mark off the Pan-Negroism of the nineteenth and early twentieth century from the post 1918 Pan-African movements of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Much has been written about the Pan-African movements of Garvey and Du Bois; much of this, however, is either too brief or too general. In this chapter, we shall attempt a more detailed account of the Garvey and Du Bois movements in the wider Pan-African context, as well as an assessment of the influence of Garveyism on African, particularly West African, nationalism.¹ But before dealing with these well-known movements, we shall briefly consider a little known predecessor of the Garvey movement,² led not by a Negro American or a West Indian, but by a West African - Chief Alfred Sam of the Gold Coast. This was the back-to-Africa or 'African Movement' of 1914-1916.

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1. Material on the Garvey movement and its impact on African nationalism is hard to come by, and as Professor George Shepperson has rightly argued, the effects of the Garvey movement in Africa are indeed difficult to trace. Nevertheless an attempt at an assessment will be made in this chapter. See G. Shepperson: "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes". Phylon, vol. XXIII, No.4, 1962, p.356.
 2. See the list of research possibilities in the field of Pan-African historical studies in Harold R. Isaacs "The American Negro and Africa: Some Notes", Phylon, vol. XX, No.3, 1959, pp.223-224. A recent work on the subject of Chief Sam's back-to-Africa Movement is the one by W.E. Bittle and Gilbert Geis: The Longest Way Home: Chief Alfred Sam's Back-to-Africa Movement (Detroit, 1964). This work is informative on the American side of the movement but relies heavily on newspaper material and does not relate the movement to the incipient nationalism in parts of West Africa.

(I)

AN EARLY ATTEMPT AT BLACK ZIONISM:

The majority of Chief Sam's recruits for the African movement came from Oklahoma, U.S.A. The historical socio-economic and political reasons which caused the Negro community of Oklahoma to respond to Sam's resettlement scheme and to regard him as a black Moses sent by God to deliver the Negro from his New World bondage to an African Canaan, have already been ably analysed in the study by William Bittle and Gilbert Geiss.³ Sociologically, argue the authors, the African movement illustrated 'the desperate hopes of an utterly desperate group of people'.⁴ The movement, they continue "provides the germ of an explanation for the social unrest of an historically inarticulate group of people, a group which could not easily verbalize this discontent in florid protests The story of Sam's movement is the story of a group of people who probably knew that they could make no perceptible dent in the world about them, and who, therefore, remained passive and silent with reference to that world The Sam movement illustrates an ultimate stage of passivity: not utter resignation, but the final and extreme, the most vigorous and only feasible protest - the emigration to a distant, fictionalized homeland, the rejection of an American residency."⁵

3. W.E. Bittle and G. Geis, op.cit., pp.5-67.

4. Ibid., p.2.

5. Ibid., p.14.

Chief Sam, who claimed his grandfather was chief of Obosse and Appasu in West Akim, was born at Appasu, Gold Coast, and attended the German Mission Seminary at Kibi. Before 1911 he had already been engaged in the export of rubber and other African goods to America and in some import business. On July 15, 1911, he formed the Akim Trading Company, chartered under the laws of New York, with headquarters in Brooklyn and with capital of over \$600,000. The company seems to have been successful, with Sam and its Negro American directors calling it 'the first Negro Corporation ever conceived amongst the race'.⁶ In 1913, however, the company was reorganised, apparently without Chief Sam, by Edward G. Pettis, who became its President. It dealt mostly in cocoa trade between New York and West Africa.⁷ Sam then decided to form his own company, in February 1913 - the Akim Trading Company Ltd. incorporated under the laws of South Dakota. According to an American correspondent, disillusionment among Negroes of the South as a result of lynching, disfranchisement, peonage and segregation, had created a situation in which emigration, preferably to Liberia, was the only hope for them. An advertisement by Sam's Akim Trading Company led two leading Negroes to Oklahoma - Dr. P.J. Dorman and Prof. J.P. Liddell to write first to Liberia and then to Chief Sam on the possibility of resettlement. Their letter, we are told, was received by Sam who discussed it with several chiefs who in turn were willing to receive the American Negroes.

6. Ibid., p.71.

7. The Gold Coast Leader, 27/12/1913, enclosed in C.O. 96/540/2558.

Accordingly, Dr. Dorman and Prof. Liddell spread the idea through the Negro communities of Oklahoma.⁸

In February 1913, Sam purchased a vessel of 3,000 tons from the Munson Steam Ship Company, and in May was invited to Oklahoma, where he outlined his scheme and the programme of his company in various meetings, and sold shares. Among other things, Sam claimed that he owned land in the Gold Coast which the would-be settlers could use, though he was careful to explain that land was held in common. The object of Sam's Akim Trading Company was "to open up trade between West Africa on the one hand, and Europe and America on the other hand; to develop Africa industrially for Africa and the world; encourage the emigration of the best Negro farmers and mechanics from the United States to different sections in West Africa, so that the knowledge of practical and modern agriculture may be quickened by contact with natives; develop mining and banking in West Africa; build and purchase ships and boats for transportation and dredging; establish schools and colleges along modern lines, and undertake all interests that relate to economic independence". This commercial venture was also described as an 'African movement': "The movement is African, not in a selfish sense. All business interests in this movement are initiated by men and women of African blood to demonstrate their capacity to take an active part in the economic, moral and spiritual development of their people and for themselves and the world. Beginning with self-development, it aims at the development of all." The

8. The African Mail, May 29, 1914, p.351. "American Negroes and the Gold Coast".

company's capital was limited to £200,000 and shares limited to 40,000 at £5 a share. It was also proposed, significantly enough, to name the new steamship line the Ethiopian Steamship Line, reminiscent of Garvey's later Black Star Line.

From the beginning, however, Sam's scheme was regarded with suspicion and even hostility, notably by the conservative Negro press and the Colonial Office. Most critics were inclined to regard Sam as a fake and confidence trickster. In reality, however, most of the Negro Americans of Oklahoma took the movement seriously, regarding it as an opportunity for their salvation. In Boggs, Oklahoma, Sam persuaded Negroes to buy shares in his company, "with a view to inducing negroes to emigrate to the Gold Coast Colony".⁹ His agents had shown the British Consul-General at New York copies of leases showing that he, as chief of Barbianita Villa, owned land known as Subenabrabo, three miles by five miles, in the Gold Coast, together with other leases aggregating 180 square miles, and that these had been duly sworn in 1910, before the Acting District Commissioner. Sir C. Spring-Rice, the British Ambassador to Washington "strongly discouraged" the party of 500 Negro Americans who were about to sail to the Gold Coast with Chief Sam,¹⁰ and desired to know whether Sam's leases were genuine, to which the Governor of the Gold Coast replied that they were not registered in the Gold Coast.¹¹ After dispatching the telegram to Sir Hugh Clifford of the Gold Coast, Sir George Fiddes was still of the

9. C.O. 96/552/6642.

10. Ibid., C.O. 6169, 17/2/1914; also Sir W. Langley to the Under Sec. of State, Colonial Office, C.O. 96/552/7116, 17/2/14.

11. Ibid., C.O. 6930, 25/3/1914.

opinion that the Colonial Office must take 'a stronger line' in the matter of Sam's African movement, and proposed that the Foreign Office discuss the matter with the American ambassador and to tell him 'that we are morally certain that the whole thing is a fraud and ask him to do all in their power to stop the movement',¹²

Meanwhile in America, Chief Sam had shown the Consul-General at New York a copy of two leases between him and Kwaka Duro, chief of Okumering in the district of Akim, and William Harkiah Ocquiati of Winneba, for 99 years of property called Abboufurawah, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles by 2 miles, and of land known as Subenabrabo, 3 miles by 5 miles.¹³ On February 19, Sir H.J. Read argued that even if Sam's leases were genuine, the Colonial Office was of the opinion that there was a 'strong probability' that the 'back to Africa' movement was a swindle, that Chief Sam was 'a most undesirable character'; that the West African climate was 'unsuitable', that 'the inducements which have been held out are unfounded', and that Sam's scheme as a whole was fraudulent.¹⁴ The Foreign Office, acting on the advice of the Colonial Office, despatched a telegram to the British Ambassador to Washington and a letter to the American Ambassador in London, Walter Hines Page, explaining to them that the British Government was strongly of the opinion that '..... the immigration

12. Ibid., minute by Sir George Fiddes to dispatch no.6169, 17/2/14.

13. Ibid., decode telegram from Sir C. Spring-Rice, Washington, 16/2/1914; The African Mail, June 5, 1914, p.360: "A 'Modern Moses'".

14. Minute to F.O. 6169 by Sir H.J. Read, 19/2/1914, C.O.96/552.

of these negroes into that Colony should not be encouraged for the reason that the land is almost entirely held communally by the native chiefs and communities, so that a negro from the United States could only obtain land by adoption into a native community or by lease, which could involve lengthy formalities and uncertain results. In addition to these objections, His Majesty's Government consider that the climate and conditions of the Colony are entirely unsuited to natives of the North American continent his (i.e. Chief Sam's) transactions are not genuine, nor the Company for which he acts reliable¹⁵ A few days earlier, the telegram from Sir Hugh Clifford concerning Sam's leases, had already been forwarded to Washington and to the Post Master General and the Governor of Oklahoma, but the United States Government decided that it had no power, short of apprehending Chief Sam for fraudulent use of mails, to prevent the Negro Americans from emigrating.¹⁶

Seeing that Sam's African Movement party was determined to sail to West Africa, the Colonial Office was at first hesitant in passing an immigration ordinance in the Gold Coast to guard against the possibility of Sam's party being stranded; but on the recommendation of Sir George Fiddes and with the approval of the Foreign Office, the Governor of the Gold Coast was instructed to pass the ordinance

15. Ibid., C.O. 6642. Sir W. Langley, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to U.S. Ambassador and to H.M. Ambassador at Washington, 21/2/1914.

16. Ibid., minute to C.O. 7423 by J.A. Calder, 2/3/1914; ibid., decipher of telegram from Sir C. Spring Rice, Washington, 26/2/1914; ibid., C.O. 11364, 23/3/14, Walter Hines Page, American Ambassador, London, to the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Grey.

requiring immigrants to deposit £25 as security for their repatriation. It was made clear, however, that the ordinance was not meant to apply to all immigrants, but was 'directed ad hoc', i.e. against the African Movement.¹⁷ It is interesting to note, however, that the immigration ordinance was quickly passed in the Gold Coast legislative council, Standing Orders being suspended so that it could be passed in all its stages at one sitting. Also interesting is the fact that Mr. Hutton Mills, a merchant and Unofficial member (who five years later was to become one of the leaders of the National Congress of British West Africa) "heartily supported the Bill, the latter (i.e. Mr. Hutton Mills) describing "Chief Sam's" enterprise as a "venturesome and foolhardy move". Also, the Gold Coast Leader, which only a few months later was to support the African Movement and put a highly nationalistic interpretation on it, condemned the 'Back to Africa' movement in its issue of January 31st, declaring:

We have heard before of Mr. Alfred C. Sam and we would advise coloured folks in America not to take him and his scheme of 'Back to Africa' seriously. We would welcome our coloured American brethren as traders, agriculturists, and mechanics, but they must know clearly the conditions they are coming to meet. Our climate is as bad for coloured Americans as it is for White men, and our Anopheles and Stegomyia may play as much havoc with the constitution and system of American Negroes as they do with Europeans and other White races. This our coloured American brethren must clearly understand.¹⁸

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17. Ibid., minute to C.O. 9069 by J.A. Calder, 13/3/14; *ibid.*, minute by Sir G. Fiddes, 12/3/14; *ibid.*, Sir W. Langley to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 11/3/14; *ibid.*, Sir H.J. Read to the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 16/3/14; *ibid.*, draft telegram to Governor of the Gold Coast, 14/3/14.
18. Quoted in The African Mail, 5/6/1914, p.360: "A 'Modern Moses'".

E.D. Morel's African Mail, with its usual concern for the land question in Africa, supported the immigration bill on the ground that it would prevent Gold Coast chiefs from speculating in land entrusted to them.¹⁹ Perhaps the most significant criticism of Sam's African Movement, from the point of view of this study, came from one of the leading Pan-Negroists of the time - Duse Mohamed Ali, half Sudanese, half Egyptian editor of the pan-coloured the African Times and Orient Review based in London. His journal had a fairly wide circulation, and was well informed on African commerce and on abuses arising from the administration of the colonies, and its criticism of Chief Sam was bound to provide ammunition for Sam's critics. New York papers quoted him as saying: "The name of Albert Sam as a chief is unknown to me. All the lands in that British Colony are tribal lands, which can neither be sold nor given away by the chiefs, I'm sure that even if the British Government allowed them to have their own towns, it would not permit them to set up a form of government. It would be disastrous if these people were induced to go to Africa and find themselves stranded".²⁰ If Duse was hostile to this commercial aspect of Pan-Africanism, perhaps fate or chance decreed that one of his 'office boys', a young Jamaican who between 1912 and 1914 had come into contact with his anti-imperialist and pan-coloured views, would draw more ambitious, albeit equally unrealistic, conclusions from Chief Sam's African Movement. That early disciple was Marcus Garvey who six years later

19. Ibid., p.360.

20. Duse Mohamed Ali quoted in W.E. Bittle and G. Geis, op.cit., pp.101-102.

was to present the world with the spectacle of a Black Moses and a Black Napoleon.²¹ His Black Star Line was to attempt the same venture as Chief Sam's Ethiopian Steamship Line, just as his Universal Negro Improvement Association is reminiscent of Sam's African Movement. What Sam initiated at the beginning of the Great War Garvey enlarged and publicised with greater effect at the end of that war.

In spite of Chief Sam's publicity campaign in Oklahoma, for which the movement's newspaper The African Pioneer was created, there were a few Negroes who were uncertain as to the soundness of the scheme and made enquiries at the Colonial Office. One such was J.M. Standifer of Chandler, Oklahoma, who wrote in January 1913: "There is in this country a man by the name of Alfred C. Sam, claiming he is the chief of the Akin Tribe in or near the Goald Coast District he say he will give each Negro 60 acres of land free of charge exemtied fram tax he says it is under the British government now what I want to know is there any truth in what he say?" Standifer wanted advice as he had a family of eight and a job, and did not want "to get fooled"; he wanted to know "whether there is any place there for the Negro of America".²² The Colonial Office replied that Chief Sam did not represent the Gold Coast Government and had no authority from them; that no land was available for immigrants and that the West African climate on the whole was unsuitable for American Negroes.²³ A Ben Willis of Beardkin in

21. Ibid., p.102; George Padmore Pan-Africanism or Communism? (London, Dobson, 1956), p.88.

22. J.M.Standifer to Colonial Office, 9/1/1913, C.O. 96/554/4706.

23. Ibid.

Okfuskee Co., Oklahoma, also addressed a similar query to the Colonial Office,²⁴ and towards the end of 1913, a Dr. James G. Guess, a Negro from Clarksville, Oklahoma, also wrote to Sir Edward Grey about Sam's scheme.²⁵

By April 1914 it appears that Chief Sam 'in view of official opposition to his original proposals' had modified his original plan of resettling 500 Negro Americans on the Gold Coast, and had settled for 50 to 60 colonists. He had also mustered enough capital (64 sixty fourth shares) to purchase a Cuban vessel named the "Curityba" (German built) from a Cuban shipping company, the Compania Maritima Cubana on February 4th 1914, for \$69,000, and had applied for permission to fly the British flag. The ship was equipped primarily for trading purposes, and the Negroes on board were relatively well-to-do and willing to pay the £25 deposit per head. His British nationality and his right to register the "Curityba" as a British ship were beyond doubt, and in spite of the British Ambassador's efforts in Washington, the U.S. Government was unable to take any action against the colonization movement unless it was proved conclusively that the representations made by Sam to induce American Negroes to emigrate to the Gold Coast were fraudulent. As it turned out, Sam had greatly impressed Mr. J.B. Keating, the British Vice-Consul in Portland, Maine. According to Keating, Sam had agreed, in view of British opposition, to confine his movement for the time being, to freighting purposes

24. Ibid., despatch No.10904, 3/10/1914.

25. C.O. 96/540/43, 20/12/1913.

and to use the ship for cargo; Negro stockholders had first approached him and broached the scheme, and evidently were confident that he would not mislead them. There was even among the colonists a Negro (M.A. Sorrell) who was formerly a judge in one of the State courts and was now the General Secretary of the Akim Trading Company. On the whole, said Keating, although he did not know much about Sam's activities in the South, he remarked that "throughout this man has inspired me with the opinion that he is earnest, truthful and law-abiding".²⁶ Eventually, Sir Edward Grey, after consultation with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, decided that there was no alternative but to allow Sam to proceed with his modified colonization scheme, even though the scheme was 'extremely inadvisable and possibly disastrous to those concerned'.²⁷

On June 3, 1914, the "Curityba" renamed the "Liberia", left for Saltpond, Gold Coast, via Norfolk (Virginia) and Galveston with about 60 "delegates". On August 20, it was cleared for Saltpond at Galveston and proceeded via Pensacola and Barbados.²⁸ The "delegates" were 'carefully selected, but rather old'; 38 of them came from Oklahoma, and only Chief Sam and the Rev. Orishatuke Faduma were British subjects. Thirty-five of the colonists gave their occupation as farmers, 2 as cooks, 1 as a mechanic, and 1 as a lumberman; 31 were males, 10 of whom were married and were

26. Ibid., enclosure to despatch No. 14537, J.B. Keating, Vice Consul, Portland, Maine, to the Rt. Hon. Sir Cecil Spring Rice, British Ambassador, Washington, 19/3/14.

27. C.O. 96/552/16336, Sir Eyre A. Crowe to the Secretary to the Board of Trade, 2/5/14.

28. Ibid., despatch No. 32800, 29/8/14.

accompanied by their wives. The report of the Acting Consul at Galveston stated:

It is reliably stated that a majority of the delegates were occupiers of land and farmers in the State of Oklahoma and made a considerable sacrifice financially in disposing of their property in order to purchase stock in the s/s "LIBERIA" and to accompany her on her voyage to Africa. The appearance of most of them indicated that they were fairly well to do for coloured people.²⁹

The ship's cargo was mainly lumber, cement, lime, flour, agricultural implements and household goods valued at about \$15,000.³⁰

When it was learnt that the "LIBERIA" was actually sailing for the Gold Coast, the Gold Coast Leader modified its criticism of the African Movement, and condemned the government's immigration bill as "harsh and injurious to the interest of the colony, especially to the cause of progress of natives"; the Government's assumption that the Negro American colonists were undesirables, it said, was "unjustified and uncalled for". A group of Negro Americans who, in spite of discouragements, were determined to settle on the Gold Coast, "must, on the face of it, be an industrious body of people, eager to return to the home of their ancestors", and any Government which legislated against them was also acting against the interest of the people of the Gold Coast. The Leader's editorial went on to say that the development of the Gold Coast required skilled people, and Negro American skilled workmen would help to raise the standard of local workmen: "We believe we are correct in saying that the progress of natives in the colony of Lagos has been

29. Ibid., despatch no. 47479, 21/8/14, S.W. Barnes, Acting Consul, to Colville Barclay, British Charge d'Affaires, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.

30. Ibid.

materially assisted by the immigration of South American Negroes into the country. This immigration was encouraged by the Lagos Government, and there is not the least doubt that the repatriates, as we believe the immigrants are called in Lagos, have contributed very largely to the progress of skilled labour in our sister colony. It is one thing to condemn the business tactics of Chief Sam, and quite another thing to put difficulties in the way of American Negroes coming to this country to settle. The Government appear to us to have confused both issues, and have allowed themselves to be driven into an action in the matter which thoughtful natives must condemn". "After all", it concluded, "this country is ours It is putting a strain on our endurance for the Government to place, as they have done, difficulties in the way of American Negroes, our own kith and kin, seeking a livelihood in our country The Regulation of Immigrants Ordinance (No.4 of 1914) is, in our opinion, a class legislation, specially directed against Black men, and our chiefs and people should see to it that that particular legislation is expunged from the Statute Book of the colony."³¹

The African Movement, however, had an able ideologist and prophet in the Rev. Orishatuke Faduma, a Sierra Leonean, formerly known as James Davies, who had studied at London University in the 1880's and at Yale, had taught for seventeen years in Negro schools in America, and was now a member of Chief Sam's party. He was brought up in Freetown by the Rev. J.C. May, and had been influenced

31. The Gold Coast Leader, quoted in The African Mail, 5/6/1914, p.363: "American Negroes and the Gold Coast".

by the ideas of Blyden and the Rev. James Johnson. In fact, most of his ideas on religious, social and political questions closely corresponded to those of Blyden and James Johnson.³²

Between September and December 1914, while the "LIBERIA" was still at sea, he contributed six articles to E.D. Morel's African Mail, outlining the history and philosophy of the African Movement. He argued that Chief Sam had been misunderstood and that the American colonists were not undesirables. He also argued the thesis that the African Movement was not a new movement but had historical antecedents: "There was always a feeling among Negroes in the New World to return to Africa, their mother land. In the early days of emancipation, and before emancipation, philanthropists encouraged the idea Nova Scotians and Maroons from British Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and other West India islands, as well as Brazil in South America, have found their way to Sierra Leone and Lagos in West Africa", and Paul Cuffee had also pioneered a Negro colonization movement. Therefore it was natural, he said, that the

32. For example, see his "Christianity and Islam in Africa". The African Mail, 22/5/1914, pp.243-245; his paper on Christianity in Africa at the Atlanta Congress on Africa held at the Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, in 1896 see J.W.E. Bowen (ed.) Africa and the American Negro (Atlanta, 1896), pp.125-136; "Lessons and Needs of the Hour - State and Church as Trustees", Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2/11/1918, p.4; *ibid.*, "African Negro Education", 9/11/1918; *ibid.*, "African Negro Education - Eclectic Education for Negro", 31/8/1918, p.6; *ibid.*, "Depreciation of Native Talent and Lack of Mental Scope", 24/8/1918, pp. 6 and 8; *ibid.*, "Popular Education and the State", 17/8/1918, p.4; *ibid.*, "Drawbacks and Successes of Missionary Work in Africa", 9/3/1918-20/4/1918. "Africa's Claims and Needs", Southern Workman, vol. 54, May 1925, pp.221-225. The above is merely a short list of Faduma's extensive writings on religious and social questions in relation to Africa and the Africans; his theory of nationalism and his role in the Sierra Leone branch of the National Congress of British West Africa are dealt with in chapter 3. A fuller account of his life and thought would require a short biography.

Negro who was deprived of all his rights in America should seek to return to his original country. "The African Movement", he continued, "is not a spasmodic movement. It is not the result of the teaching of fanatics, nor of men whose imagination runs amok at glowing descriptions of the land of their ancestors". On the contrary, its members were realists as well as men motivated by ideas of freedom in which they believed.³³ For Faduma, the three leading ideas of the African Movement were Negro nationalism (which he called 'Race patriotism and Individuality'),³⁴ Negro American missionary enterprise in Africa, and Negro participation in and leadership of the industrialisation of Africa by Negro technical know how.³⁵

The sailing of the "LIBERIA" coincided with the outbreak of war, and she was seized as a prize vessel by a British warship off the Cape Verde Islands and escorted to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where the matter was brought before an admiralty court, a proceeding which severely affected the morale and financial resources of the

33. Orishatukeh Faduma: "What the African Movement Stands For", The African Mail, 25/9/1914, p.521.

34. "The African movement believes that every man in a race has a soul, a divinity that is never satisfied until it finds its true self; that it profits a man nothing if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul - his higher and better self If the Negro in the United States cannot find himself as a distinct and respectable species side by side with the Anglo-Saxon, the feeling is growing that he should go anywhere to find himself They are striking his race individuality The present outburst is an outburst of the Negro soul. There is no fake or fraud in it. The heart of the movement is right" Orishatukeh Faduma: "What the African Movement Stands For", The African Mail, 25/9/1914, pp.521-522.

35. Ibid., 2/10/1914, pp.2-3.

colonization movement. On the way to Freetown, Sam's party passed through Bathurst, Gambia; at Bathurst, on December 22, 1914, they held a meeting, explaining the objects of the African Movement and urging the necessity of mental emancipation of the African. As Faduma said on that occasion, "If a man is a free man, he must be emancipated in thought. He must think like a free man, even if he is compelled by force majeure to forego his rights as a free man."³⁶ That almost amounted to the 'cogito' of Pan-Negro nationalism.

At Freetown, Sierra Leone, where the "LIBERIA" had been detained by the naval authorities, Sam's party was invited to various social gatherings, the most important of which was the one arranged by members of the local Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, at Victoria Park on December 23, 1914. The gathering was largely attended by leading members of the Freetown community, and the Welcome Address was made by no less a person than the Rev. Bishop James Johnson. Bishop Johnson first dwelt on the hardships of the Negro in America from slavery to emancipation, then welcomed the Negro American delegates in the name of both African and Negro American: "As we had together been Brethren through a common slave condition, so we are to-day Brethren through a common Emancipation." He also thought that the Negro Americans would help missionaries and other workers in the "up-building of our desolated Aboriginal Homeland, the repeopling of it, the regenerating of West Africa religiously, intellectually, morally, socially, and otherwise." And in characteristic fashion he added: "Whilst we rejoice over and

36. Faduma, quoted in the Sierra Leone Weekly News, 9/1/1915, p.11.

are thankful for what European or White evangelization has done for us, we are persuaded that the main burden of the work rests upon Africans, Africa's children, especially us the exiled ones, who have learnt in exile many practical, and helpful lessons that the old Homeland has long been waiting for."³⁷ The Bishop then dwelt at length on the intellectual and technological progress made by the Negro in America: "in spite of the prejudice of the white man that has persistently dogged your steps you have truly and in large and very impressive measure indicated our Race against wicked and foolish prejudice that has stood so long against us, against the doctrine of the innate incapacity of the Negro which that prejudice, for its own interest, has so long and so perseveringly preached." He also welcomed the African Movement idea and its commercial aspects, especially "the Ethiopian Steamship Line which has been inaugurated and which is one of the schemes that are intended to interpret it to the world. We see in it, God blessing it, great possibilities for West Africa and our Race. It is evidently calculated to promote for us a large measure of commercial and other independence. With steamships of our own, traversing the ocean to and fro between West Africa, America and England, in the interest of commerce, we shall in respect of carrying power, be in a great measure commercially independent."³⁸ Industry would also benefit from this steamship company, and above all, it would 'greatly facilitate the gradual return of many of our exiled brethren in

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37. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 23/1/1915, pp.6-7. For the nationalism of Bishop James Johnson see the excellent study by Dr.E.A.Ayandele: The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria: 1842-1914 (Longmans, 1966); Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 1964 - 'An Assessment of James Johnson and His Place in Nigerian History, 1874-1917, Part 1, 1874-1890, pp.486-516, reprint, vol.II, No.4.
38. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 23/1/1915, pp.6-7.

America, with all the enlightenment they have acquired, to the great Fatherland'. Finally, after referring to Chief Sam as the Black Moses of the African Movement, 'the Moses whom He has raised up to help to bring back African Israel to their own home from the foreign land which had been to them a land of bondage', he praised the self-sacrifice of the Negro colonists and expressed great interest in the colonization movement.

The Freetown press, which was already in 1915 exchanging ideas with the Gold Coast press on the possibility of launching a pan-West African movement for political and other reforms,³⁹ was also optimistic about the African Movement. Of Negro American emigration to Africa it stated: "They had stretched their hands across the Atlantic from America to us in Africa, from one side of the Atlantic to the other. If we give them a grip ... and let the Blacks in America unite with those in West Africa as one people, this would evoke a force which nothing can resist. L'union fait la force Excessive regard to the white man's thought of us will never enable us to work out our own freedom and salvation".⁴⁰ But the nearer the "LIBERIA" came to the Gold Coast, the more eloquent and nationalistic the editorials of the Gold Coast Leader

39. See, for example, Sierra Leone Weekly News, 13/3/1915, pp.8-9. The idea of a pan-West African movement was first discussed in the editorials of the Gold Coast Leader. On January 30, 1915, an editorial of the Gold Coast Leader published for the first time, material dealing with the proposed West African Conference (Gold Coast Leader, 30/1/1915, pp.4-5). The time had come, it said, for leading West African publicists to plan an early conference 'for the purpose of discussing and focussing public attention upon matters of common political interest to West Africa'. A small group of 'leading thinkers' were to meet and discuss common problems and then go back and 'educate the masses'.

40. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 16/1/1915, p.4.

became. By late January 1915, the "LIBERIA" had arrived at Saltpond, where the colonists were welcomed and meetings held, though Chief Sam's frenzied activities began to indicate that plans for the resettlement of the Negroes were far from sound.⁴¹ The Leader, however, was more interested in the new Zionism than in its legal and technical difficulties. Whatever the colonial administration may have said about the African Movement, said its editorial, men like Faduma, Judge Sorrell and Dr. Dorman could hardly be regarded as adventurers in quest of fortune. These men, it continued, were "animated by a higher motive. Their purpose is to help to link Afro-Americans and West Africans by such bonds of common interest as eventually to make the latter participators in the rich experience gained by their brethren amid so much struggle and strife." These 'bonds of common interest', however, were rather vaguely defined, and gave the impression of a curious combination of pan-Negro idealism and transatlantic commercial enterprise. Whatever these 'bonds' might be, the Leader was of the opinion that

.... any harsh steps taken against the pioneers of this important movement will be sure to meet the resentment of enlightened West African opinion. We ask those in authority to regard the movement as actuated by the highest impulses that can move humanity, and no matter what flaws there might be in details, to respect the wishes of a people who are yearning to receive back their exiles long lost to home and peace Nor is there any harm in recording the fact that this African movement is not a new-fangled notion that has been sprung upon the attention of West Africa. Those acquainted with West African history do know that this is a purposeful idea which has been realised by years of preparation. Our dreamers dreamt dreams. They foresaw a day when the Afro-American, laden with the good things stored

41. For details see W.E. Bittle and G. Geis, op.cit., ch.

from the land of his exile, would seek to place them upon the lap of Africa Advanced people may watch the scene with amusement. They may discredit it. They may even discourage it. But we are persuaded that no amount of ridicule or persecution is going to turn this African movement back For it goes without saying that movements of this sort are rare in the history of humanity, and that this one may be the beginning of great things for West Africa.⁴²

At the end of January the Leader again claimed that the whole of British West Africa was unanimous on the idea of the African movement and that Africans in the four colonies would not tolerate official opposition to 'this patriotic movement' whose aim was to facilitate 'the return of suitable groups of our American compatriots'.⁴³ Strangely enough, the Lagos press was either indifferent to the African movement or hostile to it. Only Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast took the movement seriously and defended it from the point of view of Negro race consciousness,⁴⁴ just as these were the only British West African colonies which were later to spearhead and sustain the National Congress of British West Africa.

But by May 1915 the much discussed African Movement had begun to founder on the rocks of official restrictions, legal proceedings (as a result of the re-seizure of the "LIBERIA") and poor planning on Sam's part. There was a shortage of food, a few deaths occurred among the colonists, Sam's credentials were uncertain, and the colonists were desperate. Judge Sorrell, who always kept a level head and seems to have been more concerned with sound business

42. The Gold Coast Leader, 23/1/1915, pp.4-5.

43. Ibid., 30/1/1915, pp.4-5.

44. For Nigerian criticism of Sam's African Movement and of Faduma's defence of the movement see Times of Nigeria, 23/2/1915, p.3, and 2-16/3/1915, p.3.

organisation than Sam, then wrote to the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society concerning the seizure of the "LIBERIA" and the court proceedings. In the course of the letter he added:

I think you will agree with me that, not only is the pursuit of liberty and industrial development of the Black man in the United States of America at stake upon the success of the S.S. Liberia, but the whole West Coast of Africa and its future development. Therefore, it behoves the Black man to consider well this opportunity for his commercial and industrial success, if he ever hopes to be recognized in the commercial industries of the world The darkest hour is just before day. I can see daylight dawning for the Blackman.

Sorrell added, however, that it was vital that the "LIBERIA" be released, as the cargo on board was valuable for trading on the West Coast, especially as the war had disrupted trade. He also added that Chief Sam had instructed him to come to Cape Coast to assess whether conditions were favourable for settlement and commerce, but he thought that the important thing to be done was first to free the ship and then put the Akim Trading Company on a sound basis.⁴⁵

The African Movement, however, did not get off the ground; Chief Sam's colonization party did land at Saltpond where they were given a fraternal welcome, but inadequate arrangements and other hardships compelled them to call it off. A petition from the Negro American colonists to the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. makes this quite clear:

We the undersigned accredited delegates of American immigrants to the Gold Coast for ourselves and on behalf of all concern now in Gold Coast West Africa and United States of America do hereby humbly petition through you for the information of the Amanhin and Ahinfa and we sincerely hope in confidence, that you neither will ignor (sic.) nor put aside this petition until you have awakened your sympathy to come to our rescue.

45. G.C.A.R.P.S. files: "American Negro Immigrants". File No.92, 179/65, Judge M.A. Sorrell to W.S. Johnson, Secretary, G.C.A.R.P.S. (undated), Cape Coast Archives, Ghana.

Since our arrival from America we have gratefully observed with deep appreciation the interest your kindness shown us as well as others with whom we have had occasion to meet, which kindness assures us of your good wishes towards our movement

We therefore feel our responsibility as delegates to lay before you our present circumstances, and we do earnestly hope you will endeavour to releave us from our present suffering state.

On the 13th of January we landed at Saltpond en route, for Akim our supposed destination, we continued our journey but sad to say we returned with sad and grievous disappointment. Since we returned from interior we have been closely confined on board the Liberia, suffering from want of food and water and from strenuous exertion all through mismanagement of our leader Chief A.C. Sam.⁴⁶

It is not known whether the G.C.A.R.P.S. gave any assistance to the stranded colonists; it seems that they had lost sight of Chief Sam and were being looked after by Omanhin Amonu V and his people. They urged the G.C.A.R.P.S. to "entertain this movement as national affairs for development of this country and our race in general", to assign tracts of land to them and future Negro American immigrants to the Gold Coast, to write a letter of recommendation stating that they supported and sympathised with the colonisation movement, and to help in paying the debts incurred during the detention of the "LIBERIA", so that the ship would be able to sail to the U.S.A.⁴⁷

By September 1915, amid great disappointment, the African Movement collapsed, and with it the hope of a twentieth century return of the transatlantic exiles. Most of the colonists returned to America in the R.M.S. Abosso, and the Gold Coast Leader advised

46. Ibid., Petition of Negro Immigrants to G.C.A.R.P.S., Cape Coast, 25/5/1915.

47. Ibid.

sympathisers to take the failure of the scheme with the 'philosophical calm' with which Faduma had taken it, and to remember that even English emigration to America encountered similar difficulties to that of the African movement. Faduma himself returned to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where in September 1915 he was offered, and accepted, the post of principal of the Collegiate School of the United Methodist Church. His reflections on the failure of the African Movement appeared in two articles in the Sierra Leone Weekly News, but it was still Faduma the ideologue and prophet. He began by comparing the African Movement to those of Columbus, Balboa, Magellan, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Pilgrim Fathers and other pioneers, concluding: "There are no difficulties which the American or African Negro will meet in pioneering which White peoples have not met in a more terrible form. Now is the time for us to prove our manhood. Let the African and Negro scattered over the world begin to read history and its philosophy with a purpose. In this tedious and often perilous task of developing Africa by Africans, 'He that loseth his life shall find it. He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it' It is certainly better for American Negroes to die of African fever in the effort to contribute to Africa's development, than to be riddled by the bullets of the White mob who control the local governments of the United States It is better to live even among pagans, where the majority respect their laws and life is secure, than to live in a country where only the minority are law keepers as in the Southern States."⁴⁸ Failure, he said, was not in itself a crime:

48. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 11/9/1915, pp.7-8: O. Faduma: "The African Movement: The Perils of Pioneering - A Parallel".

it was the inability to aim at high ideals, not failure to accomplish them, that was a crime.⁴⁹ Taking his usual intellectual approach to politics, he argued that it was ideas that motivated human action. Moses, for example, was dominated by a great idea - the emancipation of Israel; in the same way Abraham set out for a land he had never seen. No doubt, he said, in a materialistic age, such men would be labelled idiots, visionaries or idealists and considered failures even before they could begin. But, he argued, such leaders cannot be said to have failed to the extent that their ideas were carried out in stages by their successors: "Most of the ideas of the world's thinkers are carried in the same way. In many cases they are mere projectors and injectors of ideas to be worked out by future generations. A John Sarbah of the Gold Coast, a Blyden of Liberia, a Lardner of Sierra Leone, a Frederick Douglass of the United States, a Toussaint L'Ouverture of Hayti are among the projectors and injectors of ideas who are followed up by a large number of workers struggling to perfect their systems. Men may die but ideas and movements do not. 'Crush the movement, nip it in the bud', we hear from high authority. How can you successfully crush the idea of human progress and emancipation? Is not liberty, is not the emancipation of the soul an instinctive and natural idea? You may retard its progress, but you cannot annihilate the idea."⁵⁰

Turning to the actual administration of the African Movement,

49. Ibid., 2/10/1915, pp.7-8: "The African Movement: Its Idea and Methods".

50. Ibid., p.8; for the wider significance of Faduma's allusions in this quotation see G. Shepperson: "Abolitionism and African Political Thought", Transition, No.12, 1964.

Faduma thought that the death toll and sickness among the immigrants could have been avoided had (1) fewer delegates, about twelve or eighteen, and no women, been allowed to inspect the country and then return and report to a special committee in America. (2) Provision been made for their accommodation and welfare in the Colony, and introduction to local leaders made, (3) the co-operation of the G.C.A.R.P.S. been sought to sound the opinion of the people as to the distribution of immigrants, and to explain the aims of the movement both to the people and to the Governor of the Colony. (4) The Akim Trading Company should have been thoroughly organized, with two or three managers instead of one, plus other officers as required by modern business methods. Also a quarterly examination of the company's finances should have been made by an executive committee, followed by a full written and published report on the expenditure and receipts of the company. More problems were created for the movement, he said, when more immigrants were allowed on the first and only trip than was planned. That was not Chief Sam's fault, for "so anxious were the people to get away from political and social thralldom that they overcame their leader by their piteous importunities and changed his mind."⁵¹ It was the desperation of a minority group, desperation born of social, political, racial and economic disabilities, that in the last analysis gave credibility, at least initially, to Chief Sam's utopia - a twentieth century Black Zionism.

51. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2/10/1915, p.8; O. Faduma: "The African Movement: Its Idea and Methods".

It was these same factors brought into sharper relief by post-war dislocations, that only five years later, the histrionic Marcus Garvey was to exploit so brilliantly and so successfully to launch one of the most talked about, most far-reaching and most criticized pan-movements - the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League.

(II)

DU BOIS AND GARVEY: TWO SCHOOLS OF PAN-AFRICA:

The failure of Chief Sam's African Movement in 1915 was by no means the last attempt by Negroes, both African and New World Negroes, to protest against white political and economic dominance through the unification of race effort. The same American conditions which so powerfully led to the Chief Sam African Movement before the outbreak of the Great War, had by the end of that War created a crisis in the Negro American leadership. Booker Washington's death in 1915, together with the social and economic problems created by Negro emigration from the South to the Northern cities, the disillusionment and other changes resulting from the War, meant that the Negro American leadership, like American politics, would not be national but multiple.⁵² The rivalry between Du Bois and Garvey both in the American and Pan-African context perhaps marked the most important dramatisation of fundamental differences of opinion in Negro political and social thought since

52. Francis L. Broderick: W.E.B. Du Bois: Negro Leader In A Time of Crisis (Stanford, 1959), pp.106-122. Elliott M. Rudwick: W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership (Philadelphia, 1960), ch. 8; p.300 ff.

the Abolition era. Was the Negro American going to solve his problem in America and through the American system or must he abandon the struggle and turn to his 'motherland of the spirit' - Africa?⁵³ Before we describe and assess the two Pan-African schools, however, we must first briefly consider the apparently inconsistent views of W.E.B. Du Bois on the subject of Pan-Africa, bearing in mind that our purpose is not to evaluate Du Bois and Garvey in the context of Negro leadership in America but by analysing their leadership of the Pan-African movements, their conception of the Pan African idea, and African, particularly West African, reactions to them, to arrive at an assessment of their impact on African nationalism and pan-African thinking.

Du Bois' Pan Negroism and race ideology can be traced as far back as the 1890s, after his return from post-graduate studies in Germany where it is possible he may have been exposed to current race theories and Pan-German strands of thought. Even in the 1890s he had eulogised Africa as the "greater fatherland" of the Black Race, and by the turn of the century had even toyed with the idea of organising a small group of Negroes to develop Africa. He had also been in correspondence with the Belgian Consul-General in the United States regarding the possibility of a "development program" for the Congo directed by Negro Americans, Congolese and West Indians. In 1907 he also told the German Consul-General that

53. For a fuller discussion of this point see Charles I. Glicksberg: "Negro Americans and the African Dream", pp.323-330, Phylon (Atlanta), 1947. There is a more detailed and contemporary discussion in E.U. Essien-Udom: Black Nationalism. A Search for an Identity in America (University of Chicago Press, 1962), chs. 1-2; pp.321-339.

American Negroes would welcome economic opportunities in German West Africa.⁵⁴ Moreover, as an indication of his new race outlook the Niagara Movement, which he launched in opposition to Booker T. Washington's leadership, had a Pan-African Department which, we are told, 'corresponded with African intellectuals'.⁵⁵

In 1915 Du Bois stated that the Pan-African Movement should forge an alliance between white and black labour, yet he also spoke of a new world-wide unity based on race. Two years later he was recommending the formation of a "great free central African state" (which was to be the result of the amalgamation of German East Africa and the Belgian Congo) as a possible solution to the race war. By 1918 he had enlarged this Pan-African state to include Uganda, French Equatorial Africa, German South-West Africa and Angola and Mozambique, yet he was not clear as to how this black State was to be organized and administered, nor did he make it clear whether American Negroes were to be sent there as colonists or whether they should accept the integrationist philosophy and become Americans first. It is more likely, however, that he envisaged the creation of this State as a symbol of the new race consciousness, both in America and in the colonies.⁵⁶ The Du Boisian myth of Pan-Africa had a racist ideology,⁵⁷ yet sought the co-

54. E.M. Rudwick, op.cit., p.210.

55. Ibid., p.210.

56. Ibid., pp.210-211.

57. For the sake of clarity I have used the words 'myth', 'ideology' and 'utopia' here in the 'strong' or revolutionary sense in which they are used by Georges Sorel and Karl Mannheim respectively. For a helpful discussion of the different senses of these concepts see Ben Halpern: "'Myth' and 'Ideology' in Modern Usage", History and Theory, vol. 1, 1960-61, pp.129-149.

operation of white technology and missionaries and the approval of the colonial powers who, in his definition, were the exploiters of coloured folk. It saw its Pan-African State as a socialized "industrial democracy" run by Negro intellectuals, yet it welcomed white capital and took for granted the unanimous adherence of the latter to his ideas. Whatever the precise nature of his utopia, it would still be led by the elite, both American and African ("the thinking classes of the future Negro world"), unlike Garvey's broad-based but equally nebulous "republic of four hundred million men" which Maunier aptly called "a Liberia of infinite proportions A strange dream very American in its vastness."⁵⁸

To this champion of the non-white races, the relations between whites and non-whites were generally seen from the 'spiritual provincialism' of race, or as he himself put it in the oft-quoted passage:

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line - the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea.⁵⁹

58. Rene Maunier: The Sociology of Colonies, vol. 1, p.414 (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949).

59. W.E.B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk (London, 1905), p.13. Franck L. Schoell, comparing the "lack of world horizon" of Booker Washington's Rise of the American Negro (1899) with Du Bois' Souls of Black Folk (1903) wrote: "Dans les deux plus recents livres de Du Bois, le Negre (1915) et Darkwater (1920), les destinees du Negre d'Amerique sont definitivement traitees en fonction des destinees de la race africaine tout entiere. Du Bois a eu la magistrale conception de l'integration de son tout petit monde noir d'Amerique dans l'ensemble du grand, du titanique monde noir africain qui deborde autant sur l'Asie, d'un cote, qu'il se prolonge dans le Nouveau Monde, de l'autre." La Question des Noirs Aux Etats-Unis (Payot, Paris, 1923), pp.229-230.

In this new dialectic of race, the Negro question in America and colonialism would achieve a synthesis and would be internationalized in his private utopia of Pan-Africa as a dramatic illustration of that 'double consciousness' he so vividly described in Souls of Black Folk. As Harold Isaacs has stated in an illuminating article:

This singular personification, i.e. of Africa, was not an accident nor was it a literary convenience, for Pan-Africa was the other shape of Du Bois' dream, and while he dreamed it for Africa's fulfilment, what he really saw in it was his own.

Du Bois was a romantic racist, but through all the ups and downs and twists and turns of his thinking through the years, he never got romantic enough to choose the ultimate option of urging Negroes to migrate en masse to Africa Du Bois had the imagination and intelligence to see, long before anyone else, that the meaningful slogan for beleaguered American Negroes as far as Africa was concerned was not Back-to Africa, but Africa for the Africans, and this is what he tried to promote with his Pan-African movement

Du Bois, who had long ago chosen the path of retreat into himself, had never felt the need to retreat to Africa No, Du Bois wanted to bend Africa otherwise to his designs. He had come strongly to believe.... that the rise of the black man in America was linked with the rise of the non-white all over the world.... He thought that as far as the black men were concerned, the American Negro, rising steadily in education and attainment despite all obstacles, had to take the lead.... He tried to bring Africans on to the world scene and to make their voices heard for the first time, in the councils of power.⁶⁰

Even in the field of scholarship, especially in history, his views on Negro American and African history were heavily influenced by the geopolitics of race: "He was for Negroes in history, as so many others were against them. Du Bois knew that a people must believe in themselves, for, as he said, no people who did not have 'written its name in history'."⁶¹

60. Harold R. Isaacs: "Du Bois and Africa", Race, vol. 1, No. 2, May 1960, pp. 17-18.

61. Charles H. Wesley: "W.E.B. Du Bois - The Historian", The Journal of Negro History, vol. 50, No. 3, July 1965, p. 161.

By 1915, partly through his own curiosity and partly through the influence of the anthropologist Franz Boas, Du Bois had written his first work of history dealing with aspects of African history and culture, at a time when Teutonism was rampant and when only a few American Negro scholars like Carter Woodson, Arthur Schomburg and John Edward Bruce took active interest in African history and civilisation. Again, it was the Pan-African outlook that influenced Du Bois' historiography: "The time has not yet come," he wrote in 1915, "for a complete history of the Negro peoples. Archaeological research in Africa has just begun, and many sources of information in Arabian, Portuguese, and other tongues are not fully at our command; and, too, it must frankly be confessed, racial prejudice against darker peoples is still too strong in so-called civilized centers for judicial appraisal of the peoples of Africa"⁶² In the same book he observed that although Negroes throughout the world were becoming aware of their problems, "There is as yet no great single centralizing of thought of unification of opinion, but there are centers which are growing larger and larger and touching edges. The most significant centers of this new thinking are, perhaps naturally, outside Africa and in America: in the United States and in the West Indies; this is followed by South Africa and West Africa - and then, more vaguely, by South America, with faint beginnings in East Central Africa, Nigeria and the Sudan."⁶³ And in the very last paragraphs of the

62. W.E.B. Du Bois: Preface, The Negro (London, 1916).

63. Ibid., p.241.

book he concluded:

The Pan-African movement when it comes will not, however, be merely a narrow racial propaganda. Already the more far-seeing Negroes sense the coming unities: a unity of the working classes everywhere, a unity of the colored races, a new unity of men In a conscious sense of unity among colored races there is to-day only a growing interest. There is slowly arising not only a curiously strong brotherhood of Negro blood throughout the world, but the common cause of the darker races against the intolerable assumptions and insults of Europeans has already found expression. Most men in this world are colored. A belief in humanity means a belief in colored men⁶⁴

It is clear that by 1915 Du Bois' conception of the Pan-African movement was vague and somewhat prophetic in tendency, nor is there any indication that his new ideology was shared by other Negro American leaders, or that he was in touch with the thinking of West Africans like J.E. Casely Hayford who had inherited the Pan-Negro nationalism of Edward Blyden. Even in 1919 when he had with some difficulty succeeded in getting the N.A.A.C.P. to approve and help finance his Pan-African crusade, his ideas on Pan-Africanism do not seem to have gone beyond that of a "great single centralizing of thought or unification of opinion" in a kind of Niagara International. Accordingly, when Du Bois arrived in Paris in February 1919, the arrangements for a Pan-African conclave were very much 'ad hoc'; it was only through the good offices of M. Blaise Diagne, Senegalese deputy and Commissioner General during the war in charge of the recruitment of black troops, that the congress was allowed to meet in Paris. In fact, Du Bois was fully aware of the

64. Ibid., pp.241-242.

difficulties and possible frustrations of his Pan-African crusade.⁶⁵ Whether the American and French governments approved of it is uncertain; what is certain is that a congress of Negro intellectuals 'guided' by Messrs. Diagne and Du Bois was less likely to embarrass the Americans, who had preached so much about democracy and self-determination, or irritate the French who had so proudly proclaimed equality and fraternity, minus liberty, in their colonies.

The Pan-African Congress met on February 19, 20 and 21 in Paris in one of the rooms of the Grand Hotel at the Boulevard des Capucines. The Executive Committee consisted of Blaise Diagne (chairman), Du Bois (secretary), Mrs. Ida Gibbs Hunt (assistant secretary), and Mr. E.F. Fredericks, a lawyer from Trinidad. The Congress also maintained an office at the Hotel de Maulte at 63, Rue Richelieu. Fifty-seven delegates, including Africans abroad, represented fifteen countries: the United States (16 delegates), French West Africa (13), Haiti (7), France (7), Liberia (3, including the future President C.D.B. King), Spanish colonies (2) and the Portuguese colonies, San Domingo, England, British Africa, French Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Belgian Congo and Abyssinia one delegate each. France was represented by the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the French Chamber,

65. In a report on his trip to France, Du Bois wrote: "... The difficulties of this undertaking have been and still are enormous. It is quite possible that I can accomplish nothing worth while nevertheless the attempt was in my opinion worth while ..." Special File. "Pan Africa", 1919, Fisk University library. I owe this information to Mr. Kenneth King who worked on the Du Bois papers at Fisk University.

M. Franklin Bouillon; Belgium by M. Van Overgergh of the Belgian Peace Commission; Portugal by M. Freire d'Andrade, former Minister of Foreign Affairs; the United States was represented by William English Walling and Charles E. Russell.

M. Delafosse, historian, ethnologist and authority on African questions wrote a long and sympathetic article on the Pan-African Congress in the Bulletin du Comite de l'Afrique Francaise.⁶⁶ In that article he declared that of all the races whose fate was being decided at the Peace Conference then sitting at Paris, the Negro race had more reason to be anxious. It should surprise no one, he said, that representatives of that race had seen it fit to exploit that opportunity by internationalising their problems through such a gathering. Geographical unity based on race was not sought, nor was independence or statehood their aim. Their main purpose was to bring attention to elementary rights to be guaranteed by the colonising power.⁶⁷ Unlike most of the hostile white critics of the Pan African Congress, M. Delafosse rightly conceded to them the right to call themselves a Pan-African gathering.⁶⁸ He added that the absence from such a conclave of the Bambara, the Bobo or the Banziri was due not so much to their

66. On the whole, the French press gave wider and more sympathetic coverage to the 1919 Pan African Congress than either the American or the British press. The Times coverage on 24/2/1919, p.9, entitled "Rights of Coloured Races: Protection of League Demanded" was laconic and non-committal. Its version of the Congress resolutions differed slightly from that given in Depeche Coloniale, 25/2/1913, see the comments by Delafosse in footnotes 1-5, p.55 "Le Congres Panafricain", Bulletin du Comite de l'Afrique Francaise, No.3, vol. 11, 1919-1920.

67. Delafosse, op.cit., p.53.

68. Ibid., pp.53-54.

hostility to such union as to their ignorance of its existence. Although pan-African in a racial sense, politically, most of the issues discussed would be local ones affecting the different groups and experiences were bound to be different.⁶⁹

Various speeches were made at this Congress, some of them reformist and mildly critical of colonial rule. Blaise Diagne eulogised French rule: even the atrocities of Portuguese and Belgian rule were glossed over, although American Negro speakers gave the impression of dissatisfaction with their progress in America. Among other things, the Congress petitioned the Peace Conference to administer the ex-German territories in Africa as a condominium on behalf of the indigenous peoples. The Congress also resolved:

(A) That the Allied and Associated governments establish an international code of laws for the protection of the natives of Africa and that a permanent secretariat in the League of Nations should be established to see to the application of these laws.

(B) The Negroes of the world demand that henceforth the natives of Africa and the peoples of African origin should be governed in accordance with the following principles:⁷⁰

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69. M. Delafosse's views on the Pan African Congress seem to have been accepted by most Paris newspapers and even some government publications like the Depeche Coloniale (7th and 11th March, 1919: "Les voeux du Congres Panafricain") and Le Mouvement Geographique - Journal Populaire des Sciences Geographiques, 1/6/1919, Deuxieme Annee, No.22, pp.255-257: "Le Congres Panafricain". The latter article dwelt almost exclusively on the land issue and reproduced Delafosse's views on the land question almost verbatim.
70. The text quoted by Delafosse differs from those quoted in the Times, op.cit., and in Colin Legum: Pan Africanism: A Short Political Guide (Revised edition, Praeger 1964), Appendix I, p.151 para (c). The text, as given by the Congress to the French press, and reproduced by M. Delafosse reads: "B. Les Noirs du monde demandent que, dorenavant, les indigenes d'Afrique et les peuples d'origine africaine soient gouvernes selon les principes suivants partout ou ceux-ci ne sont pas deja appliques". My emphasis.

1. The Land. - The soil and its natural resources shall be reserved and held in trust for the natives; and that they shall have effective ownership of such land as they can profitably develop.⁷¹

2. Capital. - The system of concessions shall be so regulated as to prevent the exploitation of the natives and the exhaustion of the natural wealth of the country. These concessions should always be temporary and subject to State control. Note should be taken of the growing needs of the natives and part of the profits should be used for work relating to the moral and material development of the natives.⁷²

3. Labour. - Slavery and corporal punishment shall be abolished, and forced labour, except in punishment of crime, and conditions of labour shall be prescribed and regulated by the State.

4. Education. - It shall be the right of every native child to learn to read and write his own language, and the language of the trustee nation, at public expense, and to be given technical instruction in some branch of industry. The State shall also educate as large a number of natives as possible in higher technical instruction in some branch of industry. The State shall also educate as large a number of natives as possible in higher technical and cultural training and maintain a corps of native teachers⁷³

5. Health. - It ought to be understood that existence in the tropics requires special safeguards as well as a scientific system of public hygiene. The State ought to take responsibility for medical treatment and health conditions, without prejudice to missionary and private initiative. A service of medical assistance, provided with doctors and hospitals shall be established by the State.⁷⁴

71. Again, the text in the Times, op.cit., simply reads: ".... shall have effective ownership of the lands they cultivate".

72. Colin Legum's emphasis here differs slightly from the French version.

73. There are minor discrepancies here, perhaps due to translation, between the texts in Legum, Padmore, Delafosse and the Times. Delafosse, op.cit., p.55, footnote 3 is particularly critical of the Times text, whereas Legum maintains Padmore's version of the text throughout. Cf. G. Padmore: Pan-Africanism or Communism? (Dennis Dobson, 1956), pp.124-125. But see History of the Pan-African Congress, ed. G. Padmore (London, 1963), p.16.

74. Neither Padmore nor Legum include this section of the resolution.

6. The State. - The natives of Africa must have the right to participate in the Government as fast as their development permits, in conformity with the principle that the Government exists for the natives, and not the natives for the Government. They shall at once be allowed to participate in local and tribal government, according to their ancient usage, and this participation shall gradually extend, as education and experience proceed, to the higher offices of state; to the end that, in time, Africa is ruled by consent of the Africans whenever it is proven that African natives are not receiving just treatment at the hands of any State or that any State deliberately excludes its civilized citizens or subjects of Negro descent from its body politic and culture, it shall be the duty of the League of Nations to bring the matter to the notice of the civilized world.

With the passing of these resolutions the Negro and colonial question became internationalised in the new era of open diplomacy. Of particular interest is the fact that on questions like labour, civil and human rights the Congress anticipated future developments in the duties of international organisations by charging the League of Nations and its Labour Bureau with such responsibilities. It is interesting to note that neither the French, British nor the American press included the second part of resolution 6 in their press coverage of this Congress.

It is unlikely, in spite of Du Bois' claim, that the Congress made any contribution to the evolution of the Mandates System,⁷⁵ and it is more unlikely that its arguments for racial equality convinced anyone in Europe,⁷⁶ although it is possible that it succeeded in persuading the League to protect the rights of coloured labour. In the end, its optimism proved its ineffective-

75. See Wm. Roger Louis: "The United States and the African Peace Settlement of 1919: The Pilgrimage of George Louis Beer", Journal of African History, IV, 3, 1963, pp.413-433.

76. Even a powerful Japan was denied racial equality after the war.

ness. The men who were settling the affairs of Europe at Paris were talking 'realpolitik' and Africa was merely one of their bargaining counters. They might make a moral gesture here and there, perhaps, but it was unrealistic to ask them to take a Pan-African manifesto seriously. The Congress itself, although financed by the N.A.A.C.P., did not have the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of American Negroes. There were even critics of Du Bois in the N.A.A.C.P. who counselled 'Americanism' first rather than Pan Africanism. To most American Negroes, Du Bois' Congress was merely a distant manifestation organised by leading Negro intellectuals. Africans in Africa, however, though slightly critical, were far more optimistic and more determined to assert themselves in the post-war world. Of the 1919 Pan African Congress an editorial of the Sierra Leone Weekly News commented:

Congresses are good, but their establishment is after all a small matter - comparatively. The Pan-African Congress is a Congress of living Wills; but for years to come it shall have, opposed to its interests living Wills as formidable as Hell And has it occurred to the Negro leaders of the twentieth century that immediately after peace has come to its own in Europe and the world is delivered from the present unrest, the war to follow will be the war for the emancipation of the Negro race from European philosophizings about the Negro, and from the determination to poison Negro consciousness at the source?⁷⁷

The radical Gold Coast Leader observed that the Pan African Congress had done two things: it had brought representatives of fifteen African communities, including West Africa, on a common platform, and had presented a 'united front' on race questions. Secondly, it had 'raised certain specific issues which the Peace Conference

77. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 12/6/1919, p.7.

cannot possibly ignore and to which attention must be given if all the talk about making the world safe for Democracy is not mere vapour'. The Leader found minor points to criticise in the Pan-African manifesto, but was in general agreement:

There are minor propositions that may be criticized and the points of view implied corrected. But we must remember that the Congress was proceeding by such knowledge and information it possessed; and it stands to reason, for instance, that if West Africa had not been debating instead of taking prompt action, British West African representatives to the Congress might have usefully compared notes to the lasting benefit of entire West Africa

The lesson is obvious. World interests and world policies have so contracted that there is no standing still We must be up and doing, or else go under. In plain words, if we don't think and act and make representations, others will do all three for us West Africans will do well to remember that to most of our Afro-American and West Indian friends we are still in the back woods of civilisation - unlettered, untutored, very much requiring articulation through our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. They know no better. They have no means of judging. It is for us to enlighten them, to make them realise that nationhood has dawned in the West African horizon, and that we mean to take our free, independent place in the great Imperial Chain.⁷⁸

The Leader concluded by predicting that the next Pan-African Congress (1921) would be a far more representative gathering, that by then the Congress movement in West Africa would have been fully launched, and that West Africa would be able to be "officially represented" at the 1921 Congress. Meanwhile it was advising its readers, as the Crisis had advised its readers, to 'brush up their French, for British and French interests in West Africa stand or fall together now and in the future'.⁷⁹

Meanwhile on the other side of the Atlantic another brand of

78. The Gold Coast Leader, 12/7/1919, p.3. My emphasis; the reference to 'nationhood' is to the new pan-West African movement which is dealt with in Chs. 3-6 of this thesis.

79. Ibid., cf. Rudwick, op.cit., p.215.

Pan-Africanism, more flamboyant and messianistic, and appealing directly to the Negro working class, was challenging Du Bois' right to speak for the new Pan-African movement. This the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League led by the Jamaican Marcus Garvey. Garvey founded the U.N.I.A. as early as 1914 in Jamaica, after which he went to the United States where he considerably expanded its membership between 1917 and 1925,⁸⁰ and even established branches of the movement in South America, the West Indies and in Africa. His petit-bourgeois nationalism was based on race and economic self-help through collective race effort. To this end he encouraged the establishment of Negro stores and co-operatives and launched the short-lived Black Star Steamship Company. Although a latecomer to Negro politics in America, Garvey by 1920 posed a serious challenge to the leadership of the Negro elite, for post-war conditions were such that the Negro masses readily responded to the oratory, flamboyance, pomp and spectacle and, above all, the appeal to race pride and the fiction of an African homeland of this Negro messiah. Garvey preached the liberation of Africa and linked it with the struggle of the Negro in America, arguing that the condition for a strong and united Pan-Negro movement lay in the economic strength and self-sufficiency of the Negro in America. But from the outset he regarded Du Bois with contempt and suspicion, and his paper

80. For details of the Garvey movement see Marcus Garvey: Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey or Africa for the Africans, edited and compiled by Amy Jacques-Garvey (Universal Publishing House, N.Y.) 2 vols. 1923, 1925; Amy Jacques Garvey Garvey and Garveyism (A. Jacques Garvey, Kingston, Jamaica, 1963); E.D. Cronon: Black Moses (University of Wisconsin Press, 1955).

The Negro World constantly heaped abuse on mulattoes and the N.A.A.C.P.⁸¹ Curiously enough Du Bois' reaction was not immediate. Though critical of Garvey's economics, his flamboyance, lack of diplomatic tact in his rabid anti-imperialism and in his dealings with the Liberian government where he hoped to settle Negroes, and of his intemperate attacks on American mulattoes, Du Bois was still impressed by Garvey's honesty and leadership; he was particularly interested in Garvey's idea of a self-sufficient Negro economy which might benefit Negroes outside America and in the new self-respect Garvey had instilled into his Negro followers.

What then, were the ideological differences between Garvey's and Du Bois' concept of Pan-Africa? The public controversy between the two men and their rival organisations certainly make it appear that their differences were fundamental.⁸² It is true that their styles and concept of leadership differed, and we may even grant with Padmore that the Pan-Africanism of Garvey favoured capitalism whilst that of Du Bois was committed to socialism. It seems, however, that Padmore (aided by revisionist hindsight) exaggerates the differences when he asserts: "Common ground between them, there was none. Their concepts of political philosophies and economic systems were diametrically opposed. Dr. Du Bois was not only firmly against transporting American Negroes back to Africa, but was a staunch advocate of complete self-government for Africans in Africa organized on the basis of socialism and co-operative

81. For example, see Wheeler Sheppard: "Mistakes of Dr.W.E.B. Du Bois" Pt. 1 and 2, Negro World pamphlet, 1921-22.

82. Rudwick, op.cit., pp.216-221.

economy which would leave no room for millionaires, black or white. National self-determination, individual liberty, and democratic socialism constituted the essential elements of Pan-Africanism as expounded by Dr. Du Bois."⁸³ Firstly, it must be remembered that on Pan-Negro nationalism and the segregated economy as well as on the future liberation of Africa by Negro Americans the two men were agreed. Secondly, Du Bois' hatred of Anglo-Saxon imperialism was merely a little less intense than Garvey's, and although a socialist he would have welcomed Anglo-Saxon capital, especially in the colonies. Thirdly, although it is true that Du Bois rejected Negro emigration to Africa, it is incorrect to suggest that Garvey advocated it. Garvey's extremism may suggest such a policy but in reality in his confused way he was advocating the same policy as Du Bois. What Garvey preached was "Africa for Africans abroad and at home" and it is arguable that his projected African Republic was merely a utopia to galvanize mass support among lower class American Negroes to combat the integrationist ideology.⁸⁴ Finally, Padmore seems to be reading a later and more radical concept of Pan-Africanism into the concept Du Bois had of it in the 1920s, forgetting that in the 1920s Du Bois was very much an undecided socialist still looking for "the right program of socialism" and generally limiting his appeal to the Negro "aristocracy" of "brains and character".⁸⁵

83. Padmore, op.cit., p.106.

84. See Essien-Udom, op.cit., p.37, footnote 43; pp.57-59; p.61.

85. Rudwick, op.cit., pp.251-252.

In 1921 Garvey held his second Negro Convention at Liberty Hall in New York amid great pomp, parades and oratory principally to demonstrate his support and to challenge Du Bois' moderate brand of Pan-Africanism.⁸⁶ After a savage attack on Du Bois' leadership, he repeated his extreme racialist philosophy by arguing that unlike Du Bois' movement the U.N.I.A. sought neither integration nor social equality but 'race purity' and 'dignity'. After the congress telegrams were sent 'on behalf of the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world' to President Warren Gamaliel Harding of the U.S.A., to Charles Evans Hughes U.S. Secretary of State, Eamon de Valera, King George V and Mahatma Gandhi, assuring Gandhi of Negro support "for the rapid emancipation of India from slavery and foreign oppression".⁸⁷

1919-1920 had witnessed serious race riots in the United States, constitutional agitation in India and economic and political unrest in several British African colonies, in South Africa and the Belgian Congo. The 'rising tide of colour' took various forms in different parts but on the whole it was believed that this new race consciousness was a direct result of the Great War and that it was stimulated by Negro American self-assertion. It was under these circumstances that the first session of the 1921 Pan-African Congress met in London on August 27-29. Again, the Congress was financed by American Negroes and largely organised by Du Bois in spite of the reluctant support of the N.A.A.C.P. After some rather unfruitful meetings with the Aborigines Protection

86. For details see E.D. Cronon, op.cit., passim; Rudwick, op.cit., pp.118-221.

87. "Le deuxieme congres panafricain", Congo, June-Dec. 1921, pp.568-570.

Society and with sympathetic Labour Party intellectuals in London, the 113 delegates to the Congress met at Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday afternoon the 27th. At this session in particular, the most widely discussed topics were segregation, the colour-bar and the West African land question: "There was the general aspect - West Africans were involved here in common with Negroes the world over in what they deem a widespread grievance - the colour bar."⁸⁸ Apart from the fact that the African delegation was more than that of 1919, principally because of the Africans resident in London, an interesting feature of this session was its lack of any programme or list of speakers: "..... and the speakers called upon, either on the eve of the opening session or as they sat in the hall, to express their views on the problems of their race were mostly unprepared with their remarks. No papers were read, and the result was all the more interesting. Called upon at a moment's notice the speakers spoke with all sincerity and few notes of bitterness."⁸⁹ The meeting was opened in the absence of Blaise Diagne by Dr. John Alcindor, a West Indian doctor practising in London who was also Chairman of the African Progress Union in London. Dr. Alcindor urged restraint and circumspection in all discussions so as not to give observers the impression that Governments were the enemies of the African races. "Governments", he continued, "were not the enemies of the African races. They themselves were their own enemies just because they

88. "West Africa and the Pan African Congress", Supplement to the African World, 30/10/1921, p.xi.

89. West Africa, 3/9/1921, p.988.

lacked character, they lacked education, they lacked cohesion. That was the trouble The public conscience was awakening to the fact that it was not well with Africa and the Africans. It was their duty to speed up that awakening and galvanize it into activity by means of wise propaganda."⁹⁰

Du Bois, 'clear of speech and persuasive and courtly of manner' spoke next, briefly outlining the history of the Congress from 1900. The 1900 Congress had met, he said, in spite of the inability of governments to see why coloured people from different backgrounds should meet on one platform to discuss race problems, in order to make it known that their collective grievances constituted a world problem. Partly as a counter to Garvey's challenge and partly as an explanation to white American liberals and conservative Negroes who were critical of his Pan African venture Du Bois admitted that it was "somewhat peculiar" and "rather funny" that about a dozen Negro intellectuals should in 1919 have formed a Pan-African group "representing folk who were not by any means fully conscious they were being represented, since the delegates were delegates of a very small part of the organised and non-organised part of the Negro world and people might say very easily that they might call it a Pan-African Congress if they wished but it was a matter of words. What did they mean when they called it "Pan-African". What they meant was that in the history of the world there were groups and developing groups of negroes. For a very long time the negroes of the British Dominions had been going

90. "West Africa and the Pan-African Congress", Supplement to the African World, 30/10/1921, p.xi.

on with their own problems. They were British subjects and their problems were problems of the British Empire. In exactly the same way in the United States perfectly good and sincere people had said they had problems of their own to look after. They were American citizens; their problems were the problems of America and the place to settle them was in America. And then in a more impressive way the people of negro descent of France and her Dominions said ... they were citizens of France represented in the Chamber of Deputies ... recognised under the law as absolutely equal, not only recognised but treated as equals. While, of course, there were problems under the French Government and her colonies, nevertheless they were problems of Frenchmen, not even problems of Africans, and to be settled in France. But there was a certain common denominator to all that. Throughout the world there had been opposition, a disposition not to treat civilised negroes as civilised, a disposition to consider that negro races existed in the world chiefly for the benefit of white races, a disposition to draw colour lines and race lines. All these things together, apart from the problems in the particular countries constituted a world problem They had begun to see more or less dimly there was in the world an international problem and they had got to talk about it."⁹¹ Du Bois, however, was realistic about what such international gatherings could achieve; for the time being, his aim was to get delegates to meet each other and discuss the problems of their particular countries in the light of a more

91. Ibid., pp.xi-xii.

general but in many ways related problem. Meanwhile, an attempt would be made at the second session in Brussels to make the Pan African movement 'into an international and permanent organisation'.

Several speakers followed Du Bois at the London session. Mr. Peter Thomas, a Lagos merchant, spoke on the evils of segregation in ships and on land. Segregation, he said, was a system which was usually justified in West Africa on the ground that it was a method of preventing malaria. Mosquitoes, however, were no respecters of persons; the cause of malaria was not the African but the mosquito, "Let them turn their attention to the mosquito and not to the African. Eliminate the mosquito and not the man."⁹² Dr. Ojo Olaribigbe, later to be connected with the Gambia branch of the National Congress of British West Africa, also made a sharp attack on the policy of segregation, asserting that the morality of the white man in Africa was worse than the bite of the mosquito. Dr. John Alcindor, like most of the American Negroes who later spoke on the subject, argued that apart from its medical aspects segregation in general equals discrimination, equals inferiority to the segregated and was therefore undemocratic. Saturday's meeting ended in the evening when Miss Jessie Faussett, literary editor of the Crisis spoke about African women, mentioning the educational work of Mrs. Casely Hayford and Miss Kathleen Easmon of Sierra Leone.

The second day of the London Session opened on Monday morning,

92. Ibid., p.xii; also West Africa, 3/9/1921, p.992.

August 29th. Most of the delegates having met each other and exchanged views, the attendance was larger and included Mrs. Coleridge-Taylor, the Negro American singer Roland Hayes, Mr. Barbour James, S.H. Baptist, Ayodele Williams and F.W. Dove. Du Bois was in the chair and the subject was "the great question of the ownership of land, particularly in Africa". Rev. W.B. Marke of Sierra Leone mixed praise of British justice with criticism of land policy in West Africa, especially on Chief Oluwa's case, concluding with a warning to the whole Congress, to the effect that "If they did not respect themselves none would respect them. God helped those who helped themselves."⁹³ The next speaker was Mr. L.B. Augusto of Lagos who "made one of the most original speeches of the Congress, though certain ideas of his were dis-sented from." Augusto's speech was uncompromising and brutally realistic. The Negro, he argued, was not humiliated, exploited and discriminated against merely because of his colour; these things were done to Negroes, he said, "because of the belief that as a race they were unable to hold their own in the civilised world." Like most young Asian and African nationalists who had drawn inspiration from Japan's power and spectacular combination of tradition and modernisation, Augusto told his audience that it was only when the Negro could effectively defend himself against Europeans, like the Japanese, that he would be respected as an equal. But Augusto was also a Moslem and was therefore unable to advocate passive obedience or even non-violence: "As a Moslem he

93. Supplement to African World, op.cit., p.xiii.

believed in the teaching of the Koran. He took the middle course between those who advocated constitutional fighting and brute force."⁹⁴ Their wrongs, he continued, could never be righted by constitutional means - Englishmen left him in no doubt about that:

..... their ill treatment did not rest at all on racial grounds. It rested primarily on their political inferiority and when he said "political" he was not talking about constitutional inferiority but militaristic and nothing more. There was no use discussing their grievances - they were too well known. They must be independent. They had their own national pride They should do something to be articulate not in theory but in practice If they did not start they could never end With regard to cohesion, there he believed the real wrong rested. When they had it, they would have achieved their salvation What he wanted the Congress to do was to suggest practical methods so as to bring about their own emancipation.⁹⁵

Agusto's solution, though falling into the category of the usual Pan-Negro utopianism was nevertheless more realistic and perhaps more practical than the resolutions of a grand Congress. He suggested a 'help Liberia' scheme to be based on the financial contribution of Negroes. This, he argued, would help to make Liberia 'a second Japan' and silence the critics who had put about the idea that Haiti, Abyssinia and Liberia were incapable of conducting themselves as modern states.

Councillor J.R. Archer, ex-Mayor of Battersea took the chair

94. Ibid. It is also interesting to note that Agusto, the first Moslem lawyer in Nigeria, was very influential in the history and politics of the Moslem community in Lagos, especially the Ahmadiyya Movement, which most of the progressive young Lagos Moslems joined just after 1916. See Humphrey J. Fisher "The Ahmadiyya Movement in Nigeria", pp.62-64, 73-74. St. Anthony's Papers, No.10. African Affairs, No.1, ed. Kenneth Kirkwood (Chatto and Windus, London, 1961).

95. Supplement to African World, op.cit., p.xiv.

at the afternoon's session, stating that he hoped the British government would heed the growing political demands of the colonial peoples. He introduced Mr. Saklatvala who was then the prospective Labour candidate for Parliament for the Borough of Battersea.⁹⁶ Saklatvala gave the delegates the greetings of the Indian people, stating that India was very proud to be a part of the coloured world, and that coloured people ought to be proud of themselves. Mr. Marryshaw of Grenada, West Indies, said that although all the races in the West Indies were equal before the law and there was equality of opportunity, they were still governed by an archaic Crown Colony system, and his mission in London was "the culmination of the agitation of the West Indian people for representative government." He added that the standard of the population of Grenada was low, coloured men with wives and children working for 1/2d. a day, which was an impossible situation for which British capitalism must take a large share of the blame.⁹⁷ Much of the discussion during the afternoon session centres on West Indian questions.

In the evening speeches were given by W.F. Hutchinson (Gold Coast), John Eldred Taylor and the Rev. E.G. Granville Sutton (formerly of Sierra Leone). Hutchinson gave a long and interesting paper on the subject of Africa and Europe in the Blyden manner,

96. Saklatvala Shapurji was in fact elected to Parliament, though not in 1921, see the Times, 21/1/1929, p.7, col. 5. He was also connected with the League Against Imperialism in the late 20s. Padmore describes him as "a brilliant left-wing Labour Party M.P. ... a dynamic personality, who denounced British imperialism both in Parliament and from public platforms up and down Britain ... The most independent-minded Communist ever. A Titoist before Tito!" G. Padmore, op.cit., p.328.

97. Times, 30/8/1921, p.10: "A Pan-African Manifesto: 'No Eternally Inferior Races'."

digressing sometimes to deal with West African themes. He was also very anxious to emphasise the fact that the concept 'Africa' was a vague one and that there were in fact many Africas from different points of view.⁹⁸ Eldred Taylor criticized Lloyd George's handling of the South African delegation but praised the Gold Coast and West African administrations for giving opportunities and responsible posts to properly qualified Africans. Towards the end of the evening session Miss Alice Wernher of the School of Oriental Studies, London, asked if indirect rule was a good policy. Mr. Peter Thomas the Lagos merchant 'emphatically dissented': "He pointed out that even in that country (England) revolutions had from time to time changed the form of Government. They in Africa had assimilated the ideas of the Colonising Powers. In a Northern Nigerian Emirate what Native dare rise against any oppressor? The people who had been taught to look at things from a Western point of view, were not satisfied with conditions as they had existed thirty or forty years ago. Native laws and native customs were hidebound for all time."⁹⁹

The London session of the 1921 Pan African Congress was perhaps the most radical of all the Congresses. Most of the speakers openly criticised aspects of colonial policy and of life in America, and the resolutions passed at the end of the session were soberly presented but remarkably outspoken in their condemnation of imperialism and racism. These resolutions became known as the

98. African World Supplement, op.cit., p.xiv.

99. Ibid., p.xv.

Declaration To The World or the London Manifesto.¹⁰⁰ The

Declaration stated, among other things:

The Suppressed Races through their thinking leaders are demanding:

1. The recognition of civilised men as civilised despite their race and colour.
2. Local self-government for backward groups, deliberately rising as experience and knowledge grow to complete self-government under the limitations of a self-governed world.
3. Education in self-knowledge, in scientific truth and in industrial technique, undivorced from the art of beauty.
4. Freedom in their own religion and customs and with the right to be non-conformist and different.
5. Co-operation with the rest of the world in government, industry and art on the basis of Justice, Freedom and Peace.
6. The ancient common ownership of the Land and its natural fruits and defence against the unrestrained greed of invested capital.¹⁰¹
7. The establishment under the League of Nations of an international institution for the study of Negro problems.
8. The establishment of an international section of the Labour Bureau of the League of Nations, charged with the protection of native labour.

The Declaration continued:

The world must face two eventualities; either the complete assimilation of Africa with two or three of the great world states, with political, civil and social power and privileges absolutely equal for its black and white citizens, or the rise of a great black African State, founded in Peace and Good Will, based on popular education, natural art and industry and freedom of trade, autonomous and sovereign in its internal policy, but from its beginning a part of a great society of peoples in which it takes its place with others as co-rulers of the world.

100. For the full text see Appendix I.

101. Padmore's phrasing of this clause is slightly different; this was the clause that was to frighten Blaise Diagne into calling the Manifesto 'Bolshevist' at the Brussels session.

In some such words and thoughts as these we seek to express our will and ideal and the end of our untiring effort The absolute equality of races, physical, political and social, is the founding stone of World Peace and human advancement. No one denies great differences of gift, capacity and attainment among individuals of all races, but the voice of Science, Religion and practical Politics is one in denying the God-appointed existence of super-races or of races naturally and inevitably inferior

The insidious and dishonourable propaganda which for selfish ends so distorts and denies facts as to represent the advancement and development of certain races as impossible and undesirable should be met with wide-spread dissemination of the truth

The beginning of Wisdom in interracial contact is the establishment of political institutions among suppressed Peoples. The habit of democracy must be made to encircle the earth. Despite the attempt to prove that its practice is the secret and divine Gift of the Few, no habit is more natural and more widely-spread among primitive peoples or more easily capable of development among wide masses¹⁰²

In West Africa itself there was no official connection between the Pan-African Congress and the N.C.B.W.A.,¹⁰³ although Robert Broadhurst, secretary of the London African Progress Union acted as liaison between the two organisations and urged the local executive of the N.C.B.W.A. to authorise the setting up of local fund-raising organisations to support the Pan-African Congress and to send delegates to London to open a West African branch of the Pan-African Congress there.¹⁰⁴

102. African World Supplement, op.cit., pp.xv.-xvi.

103. Franck Schoell, op.cit., p.239, however, states: "D'abord, le contact definitif a ete etabli avec les trois ou quatre organisations indigenes qui font en Afrique sur une plus petite echelle et avec des moyens moins puissants, ce que fait la N.A.A.C.P. en Amerique: le National Congress of British West Africa, le South African Native Congress, l'African Political Organization, l'Union Congolaise."

104. Robert Broadhurst to the editor, The Aurora, 22/10/1921, p.6. Broadhurst was also the assistant secretary for England to the London session of the Pan-African Congress in 1921.

The Pan-African Congress moved to Brussels for its second session, which lasted from August 30th to September 2nd and was held in the Palais Mondial. Blaise Diagne presided, aided by Du Bois, Miss Fawcett, General ^{Sarolea} , the founder of the Spanish Anti-Slavery society, two Belgian liberals Messrs. Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet who acted as general secretaries of the Congress, General Gillain of the French colonial service, M. Barthelemy and Paul Panda Farnana, secretary of the l'Union Congolaise in Belgium. Among the delegates were some English-speaking Africans, a few French-speaking Negroes, American Negroes, and two Portuguese Africans - Jose de Magalhaes (Angola) who was a member of the Portuguese Parliament and a professor at the Lisbon School of Tropical Medicine, and Nicola de Santos, a mulatto planter from San Thome, also a member of the Portuguese Parliament. There were also several missionaries present. Diagne opened the session with a long speech in elegant French, declaring that the Congress was concerned with securing equal rights, not with communism, and that the Negroes having fought in the Great War were entitled to certain rights and privileges. Du Bois followed, then M. Barthelemy, French deputy for Arras, paid tribute to Diagne and emphasised medical and educational work in the colonies. Dr. Vitalien, former doctor to Menelik II pointed to the example of Ethiopia, concluding that Negroes were capable of great achievements. Paul Panda, the Congolese delegate, protested against the propaganda of the German press against the Negro troops

used in the occupation of Germany.¹⁰⁵ On the morning of 1st September, the speakers included Nicola de Santos Pinto who dealt with the problems in San Thome. General Sarrailh gave a short speech on the protection and welfare of Spanish subjects, whilst Panda proceeded on a lengthy historical defence of Congolese independence, arguing in the process that the discovery of America and the beginning of the slave trade were responsible for the destruction of Negro civilisations.¹⁰⁶ The Congress then adjourned, appropriately, to admire African culture in the Colonial Museum at Terveuren. This was almost a lull before the storm.

The rupture came in the afternoon session on September 2nd when the London Declaration came up for discussion. Diagne stung by Du Bois' attempt to outmanoeuvre the French-speaking delegates at the Brussels session with a fait accompli, charged that Du Bois' Declaration encouraged 'radicalism' and 'separatism'; the American Negroes, he said, were 'animes des sentiments plutot dangereux' whereas French and Belgian Negroes believed in co-operation between whites and blacks. Even though

105. For a report of the proceedings of the Brussels session see La Tribune Congolaise, No.13, 8/9/1921, p.3. Paul Panda Farnana, secretary of the l'Union Congolaise in Belgium, was educated in Belgium and took a diploma in agricultural science at Gembloux. Among his proteges were the Belgian liberals senators Lafontaine and Paul Otlet. In interviews with Belgian papers like Derniere Heure and Patrie Belge (1/1/1921) he demanded that Congolese be trained as doctors and administrators as part of the duty of the Belgian government. He even argued that the Congo had been independent since 1563, before the establishment of Leopold's Free State. These statements led an official journal to state: "Les idees de M. Panda semblent s'orienter dans le sens du 'pan-africanisme'." See Congo, Jan.-May, 1921, p. 274: "Le Panafricanisme". Pierre Daye, in a hostile and alarmist article on the Pan-African movement also suggested a possible connection between the ideas of Panda and Garvey's U.N.I.A., "Le Mouvement Pan-negre", Le Flambeau, July-Aug. 1921, No. 7, pp. 371-372.

106. La Tribune Congolaise, op.cit.

the American Negroes and English-speaking Africans formed the majority, Diagne "refused categorically to submit the motion to the vote of the Congress, on account of its "Communist" theories, adding that the Negro race belongs to no party."¹⁰⁷ Diagne was backed by the Ethiopian delegate, the two Portuguese delegates, General **Sarolea** and Major Vervloet (Belgium). Rev. Hurst, the American Negro Methodist Bishop of Baltimore vainly tried to mediate; the suggestion that the controversial Declaration should be submitted to a special Committee which would examine it and report to the Paris session of the Congress, found no support. The Brussels Correspondent of The African World described the scene as follows:

After some three hours' fierce struggle concerning the refusal by M. Diagne (Chairman of the Congress) to submit the London declaration to a vote of Congress, this distinguished Senegalese proposed the vote of the Otlet (Belgian) and of the de Magalhaes (Portuguese motions, motions asking the creation in each colonial nation of an institution of scientific researches concerning the development of the negroes, institutes of which the works should be centralised by an international body.

These motions voted by M. Diagne and his supporters were proclaimed by him adopted by the Congress, whilst, in fact, this was not the case, the American and British negroes (the majority of the Congress) not having voted for it. Therefore they protested vehemently against these deeds but in vain, as M. Diagne proclaimed it closed. This, justly, provoked further vehement protests from the American and British negroes, who then broke up with Mr. Diagne. Towards the end of the Congress Dr. Du Bois had already left the bureau of the Congress. This gross lack of fair play from the side of M. Diagne did much to surprise and pain his friends, both white and coloured, as his only excuse for acting as he did was his wish to avoid the London declaration being

107. African World Supplement, op.cit., p.xvi; W.E.B. Du Bois: "A Second Journey to Pan-Africa", The New Republic, 7/12/1921, p.40.

endorsed by Brussels, as such an endorsement should unquestionably have taken away from the negroes' cause the sympathy it was enjoying¹⁰⁸

Eventually the vague and innocuous Otlet formula was accepted as a compromise, though the American Negroes pressed for a re-opening of the discussion of the London Declaration at Paris. It was becoming apparent, however, that an astute politician like Diagne, who was as well known as Du Bois and perhaps more famous, was bound to pit his authority as the spokesman of the Negro against that of Du Bois. In terms of influence and access to those in power Diagne's voice carried more weight, at least in Europe, than Du Bois'. Had he not used his influence and prestige to make the 1919 Paris Congress possible and could he not rightly point out the fact that he really represented the Senegalese in the French Chamber of Deputies? Even after the 1919 Congress, probably as a result of Garvey's challenge, he had written to Du Bois raising doubts as to the latter's right to represent American Negroes abroad. Du Bois replied, sketching the structure of Negro politics in an attempt to allay Diagne's fear of divisions in the Negro leadership:

I write to assure you that there is no reason whatsoever to think that the Negroes of the United States are sadly divided in their efforts for advancement and in their determination to co-operate with their fellows of the Negro race throughout the world

The leading figures among the American Negroes and those upon whom the Negro world may depend for co-operation are well known men and there is between them today no essential differences of opinion. Moreover, such differences as there

108. Quoted in The African World Supplement, *ibid.*

are will be amicably settled here in the United States, and I trust you will not allow yourself to be in the slightest degree disturbed by people who are interested in misleading you.¹⁰⁹

Du Bois referred to such Negro organisations as the N.A.A.C.P., the American Methodist and Baptist Churches, the National Urban League, the National Races Congress and Monroe Trotter's Equal Rights Association, but deliberately omitted to mention leaders as far apart as Garvey and R.R. Moton. He added, however: "The fact that I was almost alone, in representing the American Negro at our Pan-African Congress does not mean that I assume for a moment to represent alone all the twelve million Negroes in the United States. I had the opportunity to come when most of the others did not"¹¹⁰

At Brussels, however, Diagne boldly pressed his challenge and though outnumbered, imposed his will on the Congress. The Otlet Declaration which he declared carried, read:

Whereas it is proven by the experience of the last half-century, as well as by scientific evidence, that negroes and all men of colour are susceptible of progressive development, which would allow their backward race to attain to the level of all other races, that the development of humanity in general is dependent upon that of all its parts, and that universal civilisation cannot be attained whilst over 200 millions of human beings are left in ignorance and economic incapacity; that the sustained collaboration of all races on

109. W.E.B. Du Bois to Blaise Diagne, 18/9/1919, File on Pan Africa 1919 at Fisk University. I owe this information to my colleague Mr. Kenneth King who is completing an Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis on "The American Background of the Phelps-Stokes Commissions and their influences on Education in East Africa especially in Kenya". Dr. Clifton H. Johnson of the Amistad Research Centre and Race Relations Department of Fisk University also sent the author three copies of Du Bois-Diagne correspondence relating to the arrangements for the 1921 Pan-African Congress.

110. Ibid.

a basis of equality and unity of intellectual and moral forces is an urgent desideratum of the present day.

Be it resolved that the labours of the Pan-Negro Congress be continued and developed in an international association on the principle of absorbing in one federation all those willing to assist, in all countries, in the education, progress, and protection of the coloured race; that the efforts of this association be directed to organise all workers to this end; that these labours co-operate with those institutions classed together in the International Centre at the Palais Mondial at Brussels, and shall there concentrate on the work of the Pan-African section.¹¹¹

Misrepresentation of the aims of the Pan-African movement by the European press, and their association of it with Garveyism and of the latter with Kibangism^m in the Belgian Congo was also partly responsible for the undue fear of Negro American radicalism shown at the Brussels session. An official Belgian journal even asserted that the Kibangist movement^m of 1921 was a direct result of the 'Ethiopianism' and Garveyism preached in the Congo by American Methodist and Protestant missionaries, who, it alleged had distributed copies of The Negro World and seditious literature and hymns in the Congo, especially around Kinshasa and Stanley Pool.¹¹² Another Belgian journalist even went so far as to blame

111. La Tribune Congolaise, op.cit., col. 2. It is hardly surprising that the Negro Americans and English-speaking Africans rejected this declaration; it tended to smack of a colonial, 'anthropological' type of research and development plan for subject peoples. The English-speaking Pan-Africanists preferred the more rousing, declaratory and theoretic London Manifesto which was more explicit about "the manner of treatment by the ruling white races." They could justly complain that they had come to Europe to launch a Pan-African movement, not to have it colonised and departmentalised by French and Belgian spokesmen. See Du Bois' comments in the article in New Republic, op.cit.

112. Congo: "Le Garveyisme en action dans notre Colonie", June-Dec. 1921, pp.575-576.

the mission of the Phelps-Stokes Fund for putting ideas into the African's head and for conniving at the 'propaganda', disguised as evangelisation, of Negro missionaries. Yet another saw the Pan-African movement as a bad influence in the Congo, and as a clever plot by the American government to rid itself of turbulent Negroes by encouraging their anti-colonial activities in Europe.¹¹⁴ Amid such suspicion backed by Diagne's conservatism and authority, the Pan-African crusade of Du Bois was stymied at Brussels. It never recovered its elan after Brussels.

The Congress was continued in Paris on September 4th and 5th in the Hall of the Civil Engineers. Daigne again presided and in his speech eulogised France and the bravery of the Negro troops. Gratien Candace¹¹⁵ "a handsome impressive man of colour", who was also a member of the French Chamber of Deputies from Guadeloupe, sang the praise of France, especially in her attitude to her black citizens. M. Dantes Bellegarde, Haitian Minister to France and

114. Ch. Du Bus de Warnaffe: "Le mouvement pan-negre aux Etats-Unis et ailleurs", Congo, May 1922, p.725. The most imaginative of the European journalists, one R. Eaton, even saw Pan-Africanism as the handmaiden of communism in the Congo: see Congo, June-Dec. 1924, pp.752-757: "Le bolshevisme au Congo". The Belgian newspaper Neptune, 14/6/1921, openly accused Du Bois being in the pay of the Soviet Union. For Du Bois' reply to the Neptune article see Le Flambeau, op.cit., "Notes".

115. For a brief biography of Candace, see the Dictionnaire de Biographie Française, Tome Septieme, 1956, p.1027. After the Paris session of the 1921 Pan-African Congress, Candace became the president of the Paris based Association panafricaine; another official was Isaac Beton. Both men resigned from the Association in 1923 partly through strained relations with Du Bois and partly through the irregular activities, sometimes financial, of some of the officials of the Association.

representative at the League of Nations dwelt a little on Haiti's history and proposed a resolution that the League of Nations establish a research Bureau to protect the interests of black labour.¹¹⁶ The Paris session, however, was not "official" and Diagne was less autocratic. In fact the session was as frank in its criticisms of colonial rule as the London session, and the French Negro deputies made no attempt to guide it. This was probably due to Diagne's fear of a showdown by the American and British delegates, to the presence of French critics like Felicien Challaye, president of the Ligue de Droits des Hommes, as well as the presence of a few militant and disillusioned French Negroes, some of whom had served in the French army and had come to see French rule somewhat differently from Diagne and Candace.¹¹⁷ Du Bois cleared the air by stating that the American Negroes had no intention of solving France's colonial problems, nor did they subscribe to Marcus Garvey's extreme nationalism. But, as usual, he repeated his view that "no Negro in any part of the world can be safe as long as a man can be exploited in Africa, disfranchised in the West Indies, or lynched in the United States because he is a coloured man." Political power, he argued, would give strength and recognition to Negro peoples; this power could only be gained when all Negroes united in a common-sense platform of thought and action.¹¹⁸

116. It was largely through the efforts of M. Bellegarde that the League of Nations Labour Bureau finally incorporated a section on Negro labour problems.

117. For details see Ch. VII of this thesis.

118. "The Congress in Paris", African World Supplement, op.cit., p.xvii.

On September 5th discussion centred on plans for the permanent functioning of the Pan-African Congress, the drafting of a constitution - and of bye-laws and other procedural questions. There was little dissent when it came to the resolutions, as those adopted were 'somewhat on the line of the London Manifesto'.¹¹⁹ Du Bois' attempt between 1921 and 1922 to give the movement some organisational basis in Paris failed¹²⁰ and the next two Pan-African congresses of 1923 and 1927 were largely Negro American manifestations, for as Du Bois himself stated later "The Pan-African Movement had been losing ground since 1921."¹²¹

In November 1923, "without proper notice of preparation",

119. The first five points of the resolutions were identical to those of the London Manifesto; cf. footnote 99. Point 6 in the Paris version read "The return to Negroes of the land and its natural fruits" instead of the London version "The ancient common ownership of the Land and its natural fruits" which Diagne labelled 'Bolshevist'. It is interesting to note that Gratien Candace, who had special interest in the French merchant marine and in commerce in the colonies, worded Resolution 6 differently: "La restitution progressive aux noirs evolues de la terre et des ses fruits naturels". Gratien Candace: "Le Deuxieme Congres de la Race Noire", Colonies et Marine, Nov. 1921, V^e Annee, No.39, p.729. My italics. The attitude of Candace perhaps supports Du Bois' statement that "..... what she [i.e. France] recognizes is the equal right of her citizens, black and white, to exploit by modern industrial methods her laboring classes, black and white; and the crying danger to black France is that its educated and voting leaders will join in the industrial robbery of Africa rather than lead its masses to education and culture men like Diagne and Candace, while unwavering defenders of racial opportunity, education for the blacks, and the franchise for the civilised, are curiously timid when the industrial problems of Africa are approached." The New Republic, op.cit., p.41: "A Second Journey to Pan-Africa."

120. See footnote 114 and W.E.B. Du Bois: "The Pan-African Movement", pp.21-22 in History of the Pan-African Movement, ed. G. Padmore (London, 1963).

121. Ibid., p.24.

the third Congress met in London and Lisbon, sponsored by the Circle of Peace and Foreign Relations of the National Association of Colored Women (U.S.A.). The London session was held in the Council Chamber of Denison House on November 7 and 8. Chief speakers included Professor Harold Laski of the London School of Economics, H.G. Wells, Mrs. Ida Gibbs Hunt wife of the U.S. Consul at St. Etienne, France, Du Bois, Dr. John Alcindor, Kamba Simango an American educated native of Portuguese East Africa, Chief Amoah^{III} of the Gold Coast, Rayford Logan and a few others. The Executive Committee of the Third Pan-African Congress passed the following resolutions:¹²²

1. A voice in their own Government.
2. The right of access to the land and its resources.
3. Trial by juries of their peers under established forms of law.
4. Free elementary education for all; broad training in modern industrial technique; and higher training of selected talent.
5. The development of Africa for the benefit of Africans, and not merely for the profit of Europeans.
6. The abolition of slave trade and of the liquor traffic.¹²³
7. World disarmament and the abolition of war; but failing this, and as long as white folk bear arms against black folk, the right of blacks to bear arms in their own defence.
8. The organisation of commerce and industry so as to make the main objects of capital and labour the welfare of the many, rather than the enriching of the few.

122. Ibid., p.22.

123. The influence of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society is evident here; the Rev. John Harris its secretary, gave a lifetime of service to the abolition of forced labour and the liquor traffic in the colonies.

Responsible government was also demanded for the West Indies and British West Africa. For French West Africa and West Indies they demanded the extension of the citizenship rights of voting and parliamentary representation. For Kenya, Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa they demanded restoration of land rights, the right to vote, and 'the abolition of the pretension of a white minority to dominate a black majority, and even to prevent their appeal to the civilised world'. Imperialist exploitation of the Belgian Congo was condemned and a system of state education and recognition of Native law recommended.¹²⁴ For the 'independent' states of Abyssinia, Haiti and Liberia, the Congress demanded "not merely political integrity but their emancipation from the grip of economic monopoly and usury at the hands of the money-masters of the world". Lynching and mob law in America was roundly condemned and racial equality advocated. They also demanded the restoration of the Egyptian Sudan to an independent Egypt and condemned the 'slave-trading industrial monopolies' operating in Portuguese Africa. They even reminded the Brazilian and Central American Negro of his 'manhood and right to be'.¹²⁵

The Congress also asked for Negro representation on the Mandates Commission and the I.L.O. The ambivalent attitude of the French-speaking members of the Pan-African Movement was commented upon and actually described as a 'defection'.¹²⁶ In view of this

124. Crisis, Jan. 1924, p.120.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid., Candace the president of the French Association Pan-africaine and Isaac Beton, who had always been associated with African political groups in Paris, tendered their resignations at this Congress. For Beton's obituary see Voix des Negres (monthly publication of the pan-African orientated Ligue de la Defense de la Race Negre in Paris), May, 1927.

and certain financial irregularities in the Paris branch, the Executive Committee decided

"1. That the Pan-African Association of Paris continue its existence as a Pan-African Committee for France and French Colonies. That a Committee be appointed by the Pan-African Association of Paris to audit carefully the accounts and authorise expenses of the Paris Office and to communicate the amount of the deficit to the Pan-African Committees hereinafter provided for.

"2. That Pan-African Committees be established at the earliest opportunity in London, Portugal, British West Africa, the British West Indies, the United States of America, in the Union of South Africa, Brazil, Haiti and Liberia.

"3. That these Committees through correspondence arrange -

- (a) For holding and financing the fourth Pan-African Congress in 1925.
- (b) For contributing towards paying the past indebtedness of the Pan-African Association in Paris up to November 1923.
- (c) For disseminating information concerning the Black World.¹²⁷

On November 6 Du Bois was invited to speak at the annual meeting of the African Progress Union at Denison House. He gave a resume of the proposed plans of the Congress and spoke on lynching in America. Dr. John Alcindor who had attended the 1900 Pan-African Conference and was now president of the Union, condemned the registration of African labour in East Africa, describing the system as 'a form of slavery', and the Rev. John Harris expressed the hope that the League of Nations might do something on behalf of coloured peoples. The meeting was attended mainly by coloured students and African visitors like Chief Amoah^{III} of the Gold Coast.¹²⁸

127. Crisis, Jan. 1924, p.120.

128. Times, 7/11/1923, p.11.

Thereafter Du Bois and the American delegates went to attend the Lisbon session organised by the Liga Africana,¹²⁹ the president of which was the Portuguese mulatto deputy and Professor Jose do Magalhaes of San Thome. The session was attended by delegates from eleven countries (Angola, San Thome, Mozambique, Guinea, Nigeria, Ajuda, Cape Verde, as well as Goa and the U.S.A.) and lasted from December 1st to 2nd. Anti-imperialist speeches were noticeably eschewed, the Congress being concerned for the most part with an explanation of the Pan-African Movement and the Negro question in America. Du Bois seems to have enjoyed visiting the cultural centres of Lisbon and the cultured company of Magalhaes. In his view, the Lisbon demonstration was 'more successful' than the London one. West Africa, however, observed that like the previous Congresses, the 1923 Congress did not possess a comprehensive programme and that its objects were not outlined beforehand. It argued that this looseness of structure in the Pan-African movement was due to the fact that its objects could not be clarified principally because it was a heterogeneous monolith, i.e. that 'Negro' was an abstraction that referred to colour rather than common traditions and objectives. The only problem, said the

129. For a brief account of this important but obscure body see History of the Pan-African Movement, op.cit., p.22, and Crisis, Feb. 1924, p.170: W.E.B. Du Bois: "Pan-Africa in Portugal". Only a liberal Portuguese regime could have encouraged the existence of such a body; it seems more likely that it was a humanitarian type of organisation guided by 'safe' men like the deputies Pinto and Magalhaes, both of whom were members of the colonial elite, Pinto being a planter. The author wrote to several libraries and archives in Lisbon on the subject of the Liga Africana. There was no reply. Information about the Liga Africana and similar bodies is still very scanty, but see R.H. Chilcote: Portuguese Africa (Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1967), pp.49-50, 77.

editorial, which Negroes had in common was that of the colour line, and even this varied: "the manifestations of prejudice vary tremendously in Paris and Johannesburg, in Rio de Janeiro, Kingston and New York". It advised that since there had been little rapport between the N.A.A.C.P., the Union Congolaise, the Liga Africana and other bodies, the primary task of the Congress should be to bring together 'widely sundered' men into consultation with the object of fostering better understanding of their problems.¹³⁰

The last of the Du Boisian Congresses was held in 1927 in New York, a notable feature of that Congress being the active participation of race-conscious American Negro women's church organisations. Thirteen countries were represented, but most of the delegates were American Negroes, Africa being represented by the Gold Coast (Chief Amoah^{III} who was at the time connected with the American-West African cocoa trade), Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria. The late Melville Herskovits, an American anthropologist and author of the celebrated Myth of the Negro Past, was one of the guest speakers at that Congress. The resolutions passed were almost identical to those passed at the Lisbon session of the 1923 Congress,¹³¹ but one interesting feature was the presence of a few 'radicals' and the tribute paid by Du Bois to the Soviet Union's fair treatment of her various nationalities.¹³²

130. West Africa, 29/9/1923, p.1137.

131. History of the Pan-African Congress, op.cit., pp.23-24; Crisis, vol. 34, Oct. 1927: 'The Pan-African Congresses'.

132. F.L.Broderick, op.cit., p.139. Du Bois had visited the Soviet Union in 1926 and returned full of admiration for the Russians.

In spite of this 'Left orientation', the Comintern, however, was hostile to such pan-movements which it considered "Manifestations of petit-bourgeois nationalism, to be fought and destroyed before Communism could ever hope to make inroads in Africa to win the allegiance of the Negro masses in America to the cause of the 'Proletarian Revolution'....."¹³³ Ironically, while the Belgian press and certain French writers were denouncing Communist attempts to infiltrate the Pan-African movement,¹³⁴ the Communists, particularly the Profintern, with which Padmore was closely connected in the late twenties and early thirties, denounced the movement as petit-bourgeois and reformist, putting

133. G. Padmore, op.cit., p.133. See also Padmore: The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers (London, 1931), pp.124-126.

134. See footnote 113; also Gustave Gautherot: Le Bolchevisme Aux Colonies et l'imperialisme Rouge (Librairie de la Revue Francaise, Paris, 1930). Gautherot set up as expert on anti-communism and tended to see the l'araignee Bolcheviste' (Bolshevist spider) spreading its revolutionary webs throughout the world. To him, the agitation of the Pan-African movement was an example of 'les tenebreuses machinations de l'Araignee Sovietique'. Of the 1927 Pan-African Congress he wrote: "Le bolchevisme avait essaye de s'annexer le mouvement en le noyantant. Au Congres Pan-africain de New-York (1927), un "groupe de gauche" avait preconise la "solidarite avec la classe ouvriere", et "un rapport de son enthousiasme sur la Conference antiimperialiste de Bruxelles avait ete a la premiere seance. La manoeuvre echoua et Moscou, considerant desormais les Congres Pan-africains et l'Association pour l'avancement des peuples de couleur comme des "entreprises aventureuses" et des organisations "reformistes (socialistes) et fascistes", attaqua d'autres groupements et surtout fonda ses propres organisations pan-negres", p.272. Allegations of communist infiltration were, in fact, partly true, though not to the extent alarmist reports indicated. See The Communist International Between the Fifth and the Sixth World Congresses (London, 1928), p.348 for U.N.I.A. and 1927 Pan-African Congress and pp.490-492 for infiltration of the South African National Congress.

more emphasis on class leadership.¹³⁵ For the historian, however, one of the most interesting paradoxes of Pan-Africanism is that Malcolm Ivan Nurse (alias George Padmore) who in his Profintern days condemned Pan-Negro nationalism with such fervour was to be expelled from the Comintern for the very heresy he had preached against. Profintern's loss became Pan-Africa's gain.¹³⁶ Race had come to replace class in the new dialectics of colonial liberation.

(III)

WEST AFRICAN ATTITUDES TO THE PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT:

We have already given a brief account of West African press commentary on the Du Boisian Congresses. In general, opinion in nationalist circles in British West Africa was a mixture of enthusiasm, mild criticism and an attitude which implied that there was no direct rapport between Du Bois' Pan-Africanism and the new pan-West African nationalism. It was a grand movement to be admired and held up as an indication of a new and vigorous race-consciousness determined to assert itself in the post-war world,

135. See the articles by J.W. Ford, Negro theoretician of the communist party and chief editor of The Negro Worker in 1928: "l'Influence de l'I.C. parmi les negres au moment du X^e anniversaire de l'I.C." in Correspondence Internationale, 27/3/1929; "le IV^e Congres Pan-africain au service de l'Imperialisme", *ibid.*, 18/12/1929.

136. For details see James R. Hooker: Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path From Communism to Pan-Africanism (London, 1967).

but was at the same time not directly related to peculiar economic and political problems of British West Africa. As far as Garvey's Pan-Negro movement was concerned, however, the position, contrary to the opinion of certain European contemporary writers, was different. As Thomas Hodgkin has suggested, the Garvey movement may have had a more significant and widespread effect on African nationalist thought than is commonly supposed.¹³⁷ Professor Shepperson has already argued the thesis of Negro American influences on African nationalism, particularly East and Central African nationalism although the extent and significance of this influence varied somewhat, as we shall show in the West African case. Some of the radical Negro newspapers found their way into Africa; for example, the Crusader, frequently quoted by West African papers, wrote:

The Crusader serves the colored people of the world, It circulates in nearly every big town in the U.S. It has circulation in the West Indies and Panama, in South America, and in the coastal districts of West, East and South Africa, penetrating as far as Kano on the Nigerian railway, as far as Coquithatville on the Congo river, and in South Africa as far as Pretoria.¹³⁸

And an American writer describing the network of influences linking Negroes throughout the world wrote as follows: "Indeed, a reader in Sierra Leone writes to the Negro World (March 26, 1921): 'We

137. T. Hodgkin: Nationalism in Colonial Africa (London, 1956), pp. 101-102. See also G. Shepperson: "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes". Phylon, vol. XXIII, No.4, Fourth Quarter 1962, p.356. This article is most suggestive in its indications of possible fields of research in Pan-African studies.

138. Quoted in Frederick German Detweiler: The Negro Press in the United States (University of Chicago Press, 1922), p.16.

have been reading the Negro World for about two years. We have been reading other Negro papers, such as the New York Age, the Washington Bee, the Crisis, the Colored American, the Liberian West Africa, the Liberian Register....."139

139. Ibid. Even as late as 1933 there were African nationalists in South Africa who, in spite of police surveillance, were receiving copies of Garvey's Negro World. One James Stehazu, for example, (signing himself 'Yours Africanly') wrote to the Negro World editor "to express the feeling of our African brothers towards the American or West Indian brothers". His observations were frank and sharp: 'The Africans are now wide-awake in affairs affecting the black races of the world, and yet the so-called civilized Negroes of the Western hemisphere are still permitting the white men to deceive them as the Negroes of the old regime, Uncle Tom stool-pigeons. If the "motherland" Africa is to be redeemed, the Africans are to play an important part in the ranks and file of the U.N.I.A. and A.C.L. I have studied comments and opinions of 29 leading American newspapers (all colored) and to my horror it is only one problem that is still harassing. The 250-year-old policy, "Please and Thank You" (Sir Kick Me and Thank You). But the lion-hearted M. Garvey has cut it adrift from the new Negro. He is now admitted as a great African leader The intellectuals like Dr. Du Bois, Pickens, Hancock and others are obviously put to shame, hopelessly moving like handicapped professors who are drunk with knowledge, who cannot help themselves The red, the black and the green are the colors talked about by the young men and women of Africa. It shall bury many and redeem millions. Today in Africa, the only hope of our race is gospel of U.N.I.A. - is sung and said as during the period of the French Revolution.' (The Negro World, 16/7/1932, p.6.) Yet another South African (E.T. Mofutsanyana) wrote criticising the anti-communist craze in South Africa: "..... These pretenders, these destroyers of happiness, these exploiters, profiteers and parasites under cover of justice, and religion are busy formulating a law that they believe will lock up communism in an iron box never to peep out again Communism is like grass. They cannot cut it; they can burn it to ashes, but when the time comes for revolution, it will positively get up like fire". (The Negro World, 3/6/1933, p.2). See also The Negro World, 7/8/1926, p.10: 'An Appreciation of Garvey's 'Africa for the Africans' by the Johannesburg newspaper Abantu-Batho; Joseph Masogha, Kimberley, South Africa, to the editor of The Negro World, 14/8/1926, p.10. Ibid., 30/4/1927, p.2. Benjamin Majafi, Liddesdale, Evaton, South Africa, to S.A. Hayes, president of the Pittsburgh Division of U.N.I.A. in The Negro World, 30/4/1927, p.5. "Voice from Africa", ibid., "Organisation Work in Africa Growing", 21/5/1927, [Contd.]

While Garveyism did not have any permanent influence, the available evidence suggests that it excited more interest and controversy and was a more powerful utopia among African nationalist groups than the Du Boisian movement. In both French and British West Africa between 1920 and 1923 there were a few individuals and organisations associated with Garveyism. It was in Lagos, however, that the movement was strongest where a small but vigorous branch of U.N.I.A. was actually established in mid 1920, almost at the same time the National Congress of British West Africa came into being. In March 1920 the Rev. Patriarch Campbell, to whom we shall refer in the next few chapters, was approached by some Lagosians on the subject of the Garvey movement and with a proposal for forming a committee of the U.N.I.A. in Lagos. Campbell advised them to postpone discussion until the meeting of the West African Congress where he would take the matter up. He thought there was something to be said for the commercial aspects of Garvey's Pan-Negroism, especially the project of the Black Star Line, but advised loyal British subjects against participation in U.N.I.A. politics 'as conditions in both hemispheres differ altogether from each other'.¹⁴⁰ Campbell then discussed the idea with delegates at the Accra meeting of the

139. Contd.] p.4. Also, Mrs. Singer-Baldrige, American Journalist and writer as quoted in The Negro World, 18/8/1928: "What They Think of Garvey". On the West African side, see some of the newspapers quoted in West Africa, 27/11/1920: "The Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League is making progress in Lagos", pp.1513, 1496 and West Africa, 11/12/1920, p.1553.

140. J.G. Campbell to the Editor, Times of Nigeria, 24/5/1920, pp.4-5.

N.C.B.W.A. and the conclusion reached was that Garvey's politics should be ignored and the Black Star Line patronised, 'it being a Negro undertaking and its object being solely for the purpose of facilitating and giving us more and brighter prospects as Africans in our commercial transactions'.¹⁴¹ The Times of Nigeria editorial endorsed the view of the N.C.B.W.A., dwelling almost exclusively on the economic aspects of Garveyism.

The idea of establishing a line of steamers owned and controlled by Africans is a great and even sublime conception for which everybody of African origin will bless the name of Marcus Garvey The inclusion, however, of such a tremendous political plan, as the founding of a pan-African Empire, is too obviously ridiculous to do aught else than alienate sympathy from the whole movement. We do not suggest that our brethren in America ought not to aim at political autonomy. Liberty is man's highest right particularly in the case of our American brethren, for whom the hardships and disadvantages under which they exist in the land of their exile make it desirable to have some portion of their ancestral land, where they could unmolested shape their own destiny and spread culture amongst their less enlightened brethren - 'De 'ole folks at home'.¹⁴²

The Times went on to argue in a manner reminiscent of present Pan-African disagreements, that the N.C.B.W.A. concept of independence was incompatible with the U.N.I.A. concept of a Pan-Negro Republic: "If at all the day should come, and come it must in the process of evolution - when Africa shall be controlled by Africans, each distinct nation, while having the most cordial relations with every other sister nation, will infinitely prefer remaining as a separate political entity to being drawn into one huge melting pot of a Universal Negro Empire." The N.C.B.W.A. was cited as an example

141. Ibid., see also resolution 5 in Conference of Africans of British West Africa, Held at Accra, 1920, p.3.

142. Times of Nigeria, op.cit., p.5.

of a movement working towards the gradual independence of British West Africa within the British Empire, and Garvey was told that what Africa needed was banks, schools, industries, modern universities and the Black Star Line, not 'wild-cat schemes' like a Pan-African Republic.¹⁴³

Towards the end of 1920, with the government taking a serious view of the unrest the Garvey movement could cause in the colonies, the majority of the Lagos elite dissociated themselves from the U.N.I.A. branch which was being run by Ernest S. Ikoli. The conservative Nigerian Pioneer wrote on 26th November: "We advise the Police to keep an eye on the Garveyites in Nigeria". Some of the leading members of the U.N.I.A. Lagos branch included the Rev. W.B. Euba and the Rev. S.M. Abiodun. At the unveiling of the U.N.I.A. branch charter on November 26th at Lagos, the Rev. Euba whilst insisting on their loyalty to Britain, made it clear that "co-operation among Negroes is the first necessity without which it will be futile to try to co-operate with other peoples". The Lagos Weekly Record condemned Garveyism because of 'its aggressive and militaristic tendencies' but said of the Lagos branch: "To us they are neither traitorous nor revolutionary, neither fantastic nor visionary".¹⁴⁴ The objects of the Lagos U.N.I.A. branch were:

(1) To establish a universal Confraternity among the race and reclaim the fallen; to administer to and assist the needy, and to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Nigeria.

143. Ibid.

144. The Lagos Weekly Record, 27/11/1920, p.5.

(2) To establish technical and industrial institutions for boys and girls. To conduct local commercial and industrial enterprises on co-operative lines, and to work for the moral and social uplift and betterment of Negro Communities (in compliance with our loyalty to the Crown under the protection of the laws of the country.)

(3) The Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League is undenominational. Meetings were to be held on Saturday evenings at St. Peter's Schoolroom, Ajele Street, Lagos.

If the middle class nationalists were opposed to U.N.I.A. politics, there were a few Lagos radicals like J. Babington Adebayo who mercilessly criticised the Lagos branch of the N.C.B.W.A. and the conservative Lagos press. He criticized the Rev. J.G. Campbell for accusing Garveyites of sedition and disloyalty and for concerning himself with conservative bodies like the Peoples Union, the Lagos Anti-Slavery Society and with such institutions as the inter-colonial cricket match. Adebayo went on to attack the criticisms the Nigerian Pioneer made of the Garvey movement - criticisms like: "The thousands of tribes in any section of Africa never at any time regarded themselves as one people or one nation" - the standard argument of the conservatives who were also opposed to the N.C.B.W.A. According to Adebayo, his fear was that the trouble with most Africans, especially those with the mentality of the Nigerian Pioneer, was that they clung too closely to 'the best traditions of British rule', forgetting that sometimes these 'best traditions' were not always in their own interests: "It is this we consider and believe the greatest obstacle and one that can scarcely be annihilated. We need not be reminded that the best traditions had not always been

upheld among us without a break," and drove home his point by quoting Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem about the oppressed yet eternally forgiving African. It was this attitude, he said, that constituted "the greatest obstacle to the materialisation of this glowing Utopia" (i.e. Garvey's utopia).¹⁴⁵ As for the Lagos branch of the N.C.B.W.A., Adebayo thought that though its leaders were sincere, their methods were dictatorial, publicity poor and internal struggles disastrous; office-holders were far too numerous, "chairman came over chairman, officers galore as lieutenants in the Haitian Army"¹⁴⁶

The Colonial Office, aware of the unrest Negro American activity had created in other parts of the continent, took the Garvey movement seriously, for in 1922 it sent a secret despatch to Sir Hugh Clifford, enquiring about U.N.I.A. activities in Nigeria, especially the operations of the Black Star Line. Sir Hugh in turn furnished the reports of two Lieutenant-Governors on the subject, indicating that the Lagos Garveyites were harmless. According to him, the movement appeared to be "inspired mainly by a not unnatural desire on the part of Marcus Garvey and his associates to obtain money from natives of Africa for which it is

145. J. Babington Adebayo: "The British West African Congress: Marcus Garvey's Pan-Negroism and the Universal Negro Improvement Association", Lagos Weekly Record, 27/11/1920, p.7.

146. Ibid., for the reference to the Haitian army see Ralph Korngold: Citizen Toussaint (Left Book Club edition, 1945), p.67: "..... To compensate for the paucity of equipment and training there was a superabundance of general officers. There were few who confessed to any rank lower than captain, and the number of generals was bewildering"

not proposed to make any very adequate return."¹⁴⁷ According to his source of information, financial contributions and subscriptions had in fact been made in some cases and sent to America by "mal-content Africans living in Nigeria and in the employment of the Government". Sir Hugh, however, had little to fear from Garveyism because, he said, from what he knew of the West African, he felt certain that his "notorious ability to take care of himself where money is concerned" would provide a powerful check on any commercial exploitation by Garvey or others. H.C. Moorhouse, Lieutenant-Governor of Southern Provinces, added that a Negro American called Cockburn, formerly employed by the Nigerian Marine, was rumoured to have been given command of one of the Black Star ships, and that Garveyism "has made very little headway here and if as appears probable, the association becomes discredited in America, it will gradually die out here."¹⁴⁸ According to W.F. Gowers, Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, investigations in early 1921 in the North had shown that copies of the Negro World were being circulated among Africans and West Indians "to a very small extent in some Provinces, among them Kano, Munshi, and Illorin", but that there was no evidence of U.N.I.A. propaganda. He added: "There is no likelihood at all of the principles of the Marcus Garvey movement finding any encouragement outside a very limited class of native, not indigenous to the

147. Sir Hugh Clifford, Report on U.N.I.A. activities in Nigeria, C.O. 583/109/28194, 27/2/1922, para. 2. The intelligence reports, on which Sir Hugh's report was based, seem to be fairly reliable, particularly when checked against newspaper material relating to the activities of the Garvey movement in Lagos.

148. Ibid.

Northern Provinces there is even less interest taken in Marcus Garvey and his movement than there was last year." So far as he knew, there could be no question of Pan-Africanist activity in the North.¹⁴⁹

The Nigerian Deputy Inspector-General of Police then outlined the aims of the U.N.I.A., and dwelt a little on the Black Star Line, stating that a number of West Africans had bought shares. Branches of the U.N.I.A. had been formed in Africa, America and the West Indies, and in Nigeria its headquarters was at 72 Tinubu Square, Lagos, the president of which was Winter Schakleford, a clerk to S. Thomas & Co. The Secretary was Ernest S. Ikoli, editor and manager of the 'African Messenger', but had been succeeded by the Rev. Ajayi of the C.M.S. in 1922. Membership was around the 300 mark, but paying members amounted to a mere 28 - heavy subscriptions and levies ensured a rather lukewarm support. There was also a brass band which the movement owned; official instructions from headquarters in New York stated that the African National Anthem ('Ethiopia, Land of My Fathers') was to be played on all public occasions. It was also stated that the Nigerian agent for the industrial wing of the U.N.I.A. was a Mr. Agbebi, but no shares had been sold in Lagos though there was some interest in the matter. According to the police, Mr. Ikoli had resigned as secretary of the local branch "on the grounds he was opposed to its political aims, though he approved of the Industrial scheme."¹⁵⁰ He (the Deputy Inspector-General) had also seen a

149. Ibid.

150. Ibid.

private letter from Herbert Macaulay when the latter was in England, to a friend of his in Lagos, "warning him to be very careful in having anything to do with this Association as it is perilously near the border line of treason and sedition."¹⁵¹ In conclusion, the report noted: "The movement is not meeting with much local success and with the exception of the leaders, the members are lukewarm and the public generally are not in favour of it. They recognise they are much better off under British Rule and have no desire to change for American Negro rule"

Apart from Lagos, Garveyism attracted considerable attention in Liberia, where its activities inevitably involved Liberian-American and British relations, and the interests of the Firestone Rubber company.¹⁵² Apart from Liberia and Lagos, the U.N.I.A. does not seem to have had much impact on other parts of West Africa. Between 1920 and 1923 copies of the Negro World entered Dahomey via one of Quenum's sons in Paris, probably Kojo Tovalou Quenum who was associated with radical African groups in Paris.¹⁵³

151. Ibid.

152. See G. Padmore: Pan-Africanism or Communism? (London, 1956), pp.97-101; also the despatches of the British Legation in Monrovia contained in Gambia Confidential M.P. No.727, 3/59, 21/6/1922; "Universal Negro Improvement Association: Activities of representatives of": Francis O'Meara to H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 22/2/1924; *ibid.*, 7/7/1924; *ibid.*, 23/8/1924. G. Grinble to H.M. Charge d'Affaires, Monrovia, 15/10/1924, and Edwin Barclay, Secretary of State, Liberia, to The Agent, Elder Dempster and Co. Ltd., Monrovia, 30/6/1924; and African World, 1925, pp.124-125: "Marcus Garvey and Liberia - An Epitome of the Liberian Government's Attitude".

153. John Ballard: "The Porto Novo Incidents of 1923: Politics in the Colonial Era", Odu, vol. 2, No.1, 1965, p.66.

In the Senegal, Gambia and Sierra Leone, governments introduced immigration restriction bills against 'undesirables'. Agents of U.N.I.A. appeared in Dakar (Senegal) but were expelled, as well as those in Liberia. In the latter territory, U.N.I.A. made serious but abortive efforts at a colonisation and trading scheme; their representatives arrived in Monrovia in January 1924, amply provided with funds to put before President King a scheme for the settlement of 3,000 Negroes from the United States. It was planned to establish six settlements of 500 families each, four on the French border and two on the British border. The Liberian President offered them an initial trial concession of 500 acres, but not on the border. The mission, however, failed principally because of Garvey's intemperate attacks on the Liberian government and his tactless criticism of the colonial powers. In the Senegal a small group of Sierra Leoneans led by Francis Webber, Farmer, Dougherty, H.W. Wilson and John Camara were preaching Garveyism. The British Consulate General in Dakar reported that the French authorities were 'engaged in watching with some uneasiness the activities of a small group of men, natives of Sierra Leone, who were believed to be local representatives of the Universal Negro Improvement Association of the United States' The homes of these men were raided and documents seized; it was alleged that they had established at Rufisque 'an active branch of the Association, provided with the usual elected officers, which branch was engaged in spreading the objects of the parent body and in collecting subscriptions for the furtherance of its

schemes'. John Camara was mentioned in the documents as the U.N.I.A.'s "Travelling Commissioner" who visited most of the U.N.I.A. branches in West Africa in 1922, and in Dakar 'meetings were held which were addressed by him in most violent language exhorting his hearers to spread the revolutionary movement which would, in the end, cast the white man out of Africa',¹⁵⁴ In 1923, shortly before Garvey was imprisoned in the United States, an application by him to the British authorities for a passport to visit West Africa as part of his "speaking tour" of the world (to correct misrepresentations of the aims of U.N.I.A.) was refused by the Colonial Office on the ground that his visit might lead to more unrest. A Colonial Office despatch observed that "Marcus Garvey probably has a larger following in West Indies than he has in West Africa, but it is in Africa that he wants to institute his Negro State: consequently his object must be to stir up trouble and to incite sedition in Africa. What he wants from the West Indies is money. Probably that is his chief want so far as Africa is concerned as well; but if his movement is ever to achieve anything he must also create a spirit of unrest in Africa."¹⁵⁵ Members of the Nigerian Executive Council unanimously advised against his visit, and importation of the Negro World was prohibited 'as coming within the category of seditious, defamatory,

154. R.C. Maugham, British Consulate General, Dakar, to H.E. the Governor, Gambia, 15/6/1922, Confidential No.384/255/22, Gambia 3/59, Confidential M.P. No.727: "Universal Negro Improvement Association: Activities of representatives of", also R. Maunier, op.cit., vol. I, p.50.

155. Nigeria Confidential "C", C.O. 583/118/34197, 9/7/1923.

scandalous or demoralising literature'; besides, his visit would be used 'to collect further sums of money on false pretences from the most ignorant and gullible sections of the semi-educated Africans of the West Coast'.¹⁵⁶

The admirers of Garvey, however, were not all 'semi-educated', 'ignorant and gullible'. As M. Labouret argued in the 1930s, there were a few of the nationalist intelligentsia in British Africa who had studied Garveyism closely and had related it to nationalist politics.¹⁵⁷ And it certainly comes as a surprise that the most outspoken and eloquent commentator on the Garvey movement among this intelligentsia was 'that remarkable Cape Coast lawyer' (as Thomas Hodgkin rightly describes him), William Essuman Gwira Sekyi (or Kobina Sekyi), Gold Coast philosopher, nationalist, lawyer and traditionalist. A controversialist and prolific writer, Sekyi was one of the most interesting personalities in Gold Coast public affairs, and an example 'par excellence', of the African intellectual in nationalist politics.¹⁵⁸ Sekyi devoted two interesting chapters to the Negro question in America in his violently anti-colonial book which recommended as little contact as possible between Africans and European colonials.¹⁵⁹

156. Ibid.

157. H. Labouret: "Le Mouvement Pan-Negre Aux Etats-Unis et Ses Repercussions en Afrique". Politique Etrangere, 1937, p.320; Hans Kohn and W. Sokolsky: African Nationalism in the Twentieth Century (Princeton, N.J., 1965.), p.34.

158. Magnus Sampson: "Kobina Sekyi as I Knew Him", Sekyi Papers, Cape Coast Regional Archives, 716/64.

159. K. Sekyi: The Parting of the Ways, 87 pp. (n.d., 1922?). Internal evidence (e.g. his reference to 'the recent opening of Achimota') suggests that the work was published in 1925; the author came across it while studying the Sekyi papers at Cape Coast, Ghana, in 1966.

Writing in defence of the Garvey movement he argued that any manifestation of solidarity between Africans and other Negroes was generally regarded with great suspicion by the white man who had "got so hopelessly alarmed by the necessary spade-work that Marcus Garvey is doing towards the erection, in the not very remote future of [an] abiding edifice of racial collaboration, that he has further overlooked the truth of the well-known remark: 'Abuse is no argument'." He went straight to the main point in his pan-African thesis when he asserted:

The present attitude of a section of the white writing public, coupled with certain somewhat questionable, though legally authorised, acts of interference with the freedom of the press has made it essential that we in Africa should dispassionately register our own opinion on this Garvey scare and therewith set down our considered views on the subject of our brethren in America. The recent official outburst against the Congress movement may have been very closely connected with the white eruption against Garveyism we should do well to guard against any future white propaganda against the Congress, now that it is well known that the Congress stands for the unification of British West Africa, and therefore is bound ultimately to consider seriously the question of co-operation with our brethren in French West Africa, for example, then with those in other parts of Africa, and finally with those abroad It is therefore necessary, in fact, vital, to our future development as a race, that we should now inaugurate a period of systematic observation of our brethren not only in America but also elsewhere abroad.¹⁶⁰

Unlike the majority of the Pan-African utopians, however, Sekyi was able to perceive that the African Diaspora, for various historical and sociological reasons, had ceased to have any of the attributes of a Nation and that West Indians and Negro Americans, in spite of the new race consciousness and Pan-Melanism, had inherited Anglo-Saxon prejudices against the African

and were 'ipso facto' disqualified from assuming any political leadership in the African continent:

From Marcus Garvey's announcements regarding Africa, it is clear that he does not know even the level of acquaintance with Western ideals and of capacity to assimilate and adapt whatever comes from or is traceable to the modern world. What is much more important is that he does not understand how we Africans in Africa feel about such matters as the Colonial Government; neither can he and his set realise that republican ideals in the crude form in which they are maintained, in theory, at least, in America go directly against the spirit of Africa, which is the only continent in the whole world peopled by human beings who have in their souls the secret of constitutional monarchy What Marcus Garvey and any other leader of Afro-American thought has first to appreciate before he can present a case sufficiently sound for Africa to support in the matter of combination or co-operation among all Africans at home and abroad, is the peculiar nature of the African standpoint in social and political institutions. The salvation of the Africans in the world cannot but be most materially assisted by the Africans in America but must be controlled and directed from African Africa and thoroughly African Africans.¹⁶¹

Sekyi's other strictures against the Pan-Africanism of Negro Americans and West Indians merit quotation not only because they indicate a different concept of Pan-Africanism on the part of the West African nationalist intellectuals but also because they illustrate the dilemma posed by the Negro American 'double consciousness'. To the Negro American, Africa in the abstract was both a romantic illusion and a sharp reminder that he was an American first, and this dichotomy, in Sekyi's view, meant that political leadership of Africa must come from within Africa:

If there is anything now that militates or is likely to militate against any American Negro movement towards Africa, it is the Americanisation of the American Negro. So long as he remains an American in ideal, his sphere of usefulness in Africa, if and when he gets there, will be very much circumscribed, in fact so restricted as to become a hindrance to his own happy existence

161. Ibid., pp.23-24.

Even now in the West Indies and in America will be found people who think we are in such a condition that the only part we can play in the prevailing endeavour on the part of the darker races to attain a better place since the Great War than they had before it, is to be led by them. That is a very serious mistake which ought to be corrected as early as possible. We in Africa can, and do, claim to be the only persons qualified to keep the tone of the present spirit of unrest at the proper pitch, because we are in possession and charge of the great and glorious traditions of our ancestors and the peerless social and political institutions which our ancestors perfected long ago, and which it is our sacred duty to preserve from the inroads of European irresponsibility as regards things non-European. We claim that we should be the architects, and that our brethren in America and those in the West Indies should be among the builders of the structure of racial oneness We admit that we are behind in steady acquaintance with the mechanical devices of the Western worldbut we contend that we have the controlling forces in our hands, and we in Africa alone understand these forces and can direct them aright for the good of the whole Negro race.¹⁶²

Chapter 3 of Sekyi's manuscript, entitled "Our Brethren Abroad" dealt with Liberia and Haiti and was a vigorous defence of these symbols of Negro emancipation. Like Alexander Crummell¹⁶³ (Blyden's contemporary), he argued that the failure of these states was not due to any inherent inability of Negroes to rule themselves as European critics maintained, but to a wrong concept of the state on the part of the Negro. He anticipated modern Pan-Africanists by arguing that these states had failed in the task of nation-building precisely because they were 'artificial' states created by 'artificial means and maintained by methods equally artificial'. Here for the first time perhaps one finds the germ

162. Ibid., pp.24-27.

163. Alexander Crummell: The Relation and Duties of the Free Colored Men in America to Africa (Hartford, 1861); The Duty of a Rising Christian State (London, 1856) Africa and America (London, 1891).

of the 'Balkanisation' idea¹⁶⁴ in Pan-African theory and a rejection of the European concept of the state:

The South American and the Balkan states, particularly the new state of Albania as it was before the Great War, might as well be taken as proof positive that the Southern Europeans are not capable of self-rule in a state. The white thinker on the theory of the state has hitherto based himself on the ground that the state can be created only by force, so that in the last resort force or war is the only means to the end of creating and maintaining a state. On the other hand, when there are enough African thinkers to impress the world with their essentially African theory of the state, it will be found that they are seeking to get the world to accept the view that there is another kind of state, so called patriarchial, which is not based on or kept by force in the artificial shape of war; and such states can be found to be the units in confederations such as the group of small states in the Gold Coast In other words, the sort of force that is applicable in the national African state differs from the sort of force applicable in the artificial state, whether African or non-African which is based on force in the sense of war the latter is such that every subordinated or subdued state feels it its most sacred duty to itself to overthrow it as soon as it is able so to do without danger to itself [i.e. people under alien rule based on force must do all in their power to regain their freedom].¹⁶⁵

The inference from Sekyi's argument was that 'artificial' states like Haiti and Liberia lacked the 'impulse' to remain truly sovereign in a world dominated by Europe; even the Balkan and South American states, he said, were weak and unstable in that environment. Had

164. Cf. Professor G. Shepperson: "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes", Phylon, Fourth Quarter, 1962, vol. XXIII, No.4, p.357: "5. Balkanization: How far is the fear of this in Africa which plays an important part in contemporary all-African movements of relatively recent introduction?" W.E.G. Sekyi's arguments are particularly relevant in the attempt to answer this question.

165. W.E.G. Sekyi, op.cit., pp.28-29. The author saw drafts of manuscripts on African political theory by Sekyi in the Sekyi papers - entitled 'An African Political Hierarchy' (Sekyi Papers, Cape Coast); there was also the draft of a thesis for the London M.A. entitled The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered In the Light of Its Bearing on the Conception of Duty, the first chapter being on 'The Social System of the people of the Gold Coast' (ibid.).

Haitian and Liberian leaders learnt the secret of African democracy, he argued, they 'would have learnt a great deal to make them unique among the present day states, for the African who, in addition to his being African, has attained to the knowledge of things European, is at any time more than a match for any European who thinks himself of outstanding ability Therefore Liberia and Haiti being primarily African and only secondary (sic) Americans, should have sought to africanise America instead of americanising Africa'.¹⁶⁶

Sekyi then reiterated the argument frequently made West African nationalists in relation to the Garvey Movement; he supported the industrial and economic aspects of Garveyism whilst rejecting its political pretensions:

We have little or nothing to learn from West Indian or American political institutions; but we have very much to learn from their industrial or economic organisations.¹⁶⁷

He also commented on the cultural differences between Negro Americans and Africans, and recommended student exchanges as a step towards better understanding and as a means of freeing African students from the 'incarceration' of Achimota where they were 'under the absolute rule of white tutors without experience or inside knowledge of the complexities of the African mind and temperaments'. His Pan-Africanism thus amounted to cultural and technical co-operation with Negro Americans and West Indians in order to prepare West Africa 'to face England, when she shall become too

166. Ibid., p.32.

167. Ibid., p.34.

arrogant to be considered our guardian, to remonstrate with her to abandon her dog-in-the-manger policy which has reduced us to our present condition of ineptitude in many respects',¹⁶⁸ and to a very critical assessment of Negro American and West Indian visions of liberating a benighted Africa. He commented on Negro nationalism in America, especially on the Du Bois-Garvey controversy adding:

In my opinion the gap between the two camps is inevitable and will itself produce the element that will bridge it. We in non-Mohammedan Africa where classes of the very low order observable in so-called civilised countries are unknown, cannot very well understand the situation in America. It should however be noted that Dubois was opposed to certain aspects of the late Booker Washington's policy and propaganda, and rightly opposed. Tuskegee can no more solve the racial problem in America than lynching and political and social oppression can I think Garveyism is the only possible step in the United States towards the harmonious blending of the ideas of Booker Washington, the apparent materialist, with those of Dubois the apparent idealist, into a real solution of, or a solidly progressive effort to solve, the question, if not of race, at any rate that of colour, in its operation against social and political enfranchisement in America.¹⁶⁹

Turning specifically to Garvey's Pan-Negroism he commented:

Garvey may make blunders in policy, and perhaps either does not take sufficient time to study conditions before he issues out his orders or begins to formulate his conclusions, or is not aided by a sufficiently competent and painstaking staff in his efforts to deal with facts relating to Africa and Africans If the only objection to Garvey is that he sometimes makes blunders, that objection is weak if urged by Englishmen or anglicised Britishers who have nothing else to say against him. At any rate, we, who are after all those whose opinions matter as regards the American situation believe that Marcus Garvey is doing necessary work, and would very much regret if Liberia is being led by braised (sic) propaganda to interpose obstacles which will only make the force of the Garvey movement fiercer when it overcomes its obstacles and sweeps on.¹⁷⁰

168. Ibid., p.37.

169. Ibid.

170. Ibid., pp.37-38.

Finally, Sekyi examined the idea of Negro emigration to Africa but though sympathetic, he ruled it out on the ground that it would 'create new sources of trouble'. He repeated the West African bourgeois nationalist view that "The question of a return to Africa from America of our brethren there is not to be encouraged by us The most we can allow is to open a way for the influx of the money of capitalists of our own race in America and the West Indies in order that we may ourselves compete with the gigantic combinations that are being formed in England for the undisguisable purpose of establishing a sort of legal or legalised monopoly of trade."¹⁷¹

This chapter has sought to outline the history of the Pan-African movement from 1914 to the close of the 20s. and to examine the attitudes of West African nationalists towards it. On the basis of the evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that in spite of their objections to Garvey's concept of a Pan-African state, the majority of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders of the N.C.B.W.A., on the whole, tended to be more sympathetic to Garvey's Pan-Negro nationalism and its economic goals, than to the more majestic, more intellectual but ineffective movement of W.E.B. Du Bois. As the subsequent chapters on the N.C.B.W.A. will show, they attempted between 1920 and 1930 to blend Pan-African idealism with a realistic consideration of their social and economic interests.

¹⁷¹. Ibid., p.40.

CHAPTER III

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BRITISH WEST AFRICA: 1920-1930BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS

(I)

If movement on the political stage after the Great War was mainly concerned with the post-war readjustment of European interests in the continent and with the redistribution of the German colonial empire, it was not entirely limited to this. There was also apparent a stirring of African desire for a larger share in their own affairs, even if voiced by a self-appointed leadership of the intelligentsia through various congresses and deputations convened in the post-war years.

P A R T II

Encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's new edition of nineteenth-century liberal democracy, by the general optimism of the post-war years, by the new rationalism, and by the prospect of a new world-wide reconstruction,¹ the press of the pan-African movement in the United States and of the nationalist groups in West and South Africa, seriously came to believe in their ability to influence the decisions of the peace-makers at Versailles. As one correspondent to The Gold Coast Leader observed:

What the average Gold Coast man should be made to know very thoroughly is that this war is but the presage of an unprecedented revolution in the social, economical and political life of all the nations of the earth, and that behind the great forces of destruction that have ranged themselves

1. E.H. Carr: 'The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939', pp. 36-37. (Macmillan, 1942); Charles Adrian in Phylon, vol. 23, 1962, p. 11 argues that "A third source of the Pan-African ideology is the Wilsonian idealism in international affairs". "The Pan-African Movement: The Search for Organization and Community".

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against the other are yet more potent forces having for their object the reconstruction of the world.²

Yet another lengthy editorial entitled 'RACIAL UNITY' spoke in glowing terms about the millenium:

"Never before were the signs of the times clearer than the present as to the coming together of Africans throughout the world. Instinctively it is being felt that in race solidarity is the coming strength of a people who have once again in the cycle of the ages to contribute substantially to the new civilisation that is about dawning. When you speak of unity men prick their ears as if a dangerous dogma were being preached. And yet this idea must surely be born of ignorance. It seems to be forgotten that the whole universe makes for unity"³

It was this 'new utopia',⁴ created by the transplantation of the theories of liberal democracy to areas different from Western Europe, that was to lead to the disillusionment of the late twenties and thirties.⁵ What follows in the Leader is to a large extent typical of the utopian thought of pan-movements, and of that mixture of idealism, nationalism and moral imperialism:

"Now we are a scattered race even as are the Jews. In some respects we have been the burden bearers as they are. But those very facts make it necessary that our race consciousness should be as pronounced as theirs. It is but asserting the commonplace when we say that the expatriation of some of our people to America and to the West Indies in times past was, in the order of Providence, to hasten a national consciousness; and today our brethren there are turning with longing eyes to the fatherland. Moreover, he is but a poor observer who does not realise that it is but a matter of time when Africa North, West, South and East will come together"

"Again, when you talk of unity a materialistic age can think of nothing else but force as understood and applied in modern times. It is forgotten that true power, in the last

2. The Gold Coast Leader, p.5, January 5, 1918.

3. Ibid., pp.4-5, July 24-31, 1920.

4. E.H. Carr, op.cit., p.36.

5. Ibid., p.37.

analysis, is not force at all, but rather consists in that calm moral law in the consciences of men, which in the end rules the universe. African racial unity, therefore, does not necessarily predicate force

"Strange to say, Africa can cure materialistic Europe of the war craze, that is, Africa intelligently combined and co-operative..... The Nations involved (in the last war) tacitly took it that Africa would always be willing to be bled for the benefit of Europe. It never occurred to the schemers that the African might some day cry halt and desire actively to have a hand in the game. But really, that is what it is coming to If that happy hour should strike in world affairs, mankind will perforce adopt a new moral perspective. Nor is all this a mere fanciful theory Economically Africa can starve Europe in no time. And starving men cannot afford the argument of the Maxim and the Tank."⁶

While America was showing Europe how to be better Europeans after the war, the black citizens of that republic were doing pioneering work for a world-wide movement of coloured peoples and at the same time sharpening an already incipient racial consciousness in many parts of Africa. As The Gold Coast Leader put it in an editorial:

..... what about the signs of encouragement we opened with? They come to-day from America, from the promoters of a movement full of hope for the future of our beloved fatherland. It seems that Africans all the world over are thinking, thinking of a day which shall see great things for the race. This is the outcome of a racial consciousness which takes in the members of our group variety in all parts of our Continent and wherever else their habitat may be in other parts of the world. You may call them Africans or Ethiopians, and we care not to split straws with any, scientific or merely polemical, who ventures to dispute either epithet as appropriate to the racial group we have in mind. We say, then, that a great thought wave is passing over the entire Ethiopian group, and it is possible to feel the pulse of the life force animating all

6. The Gold Coast Leader, pp. 4-5, July 24-31, 1920.

7. The Gold Coast Leader, pp. 4-5, October 28, 1920.

An editorial of the same paper acknowledged the extent of the Negro American influence when it declared: "... our intelligent brethren on the other side of the Atlantic are to-day in close touch with all our local movements, as we with theirs."⁸ Franck Schoell, writing in 1923, was worried about what he called "l'épanouissement soudain de solidarité raciale qui fixe de plus en plus l'attention des Noirs des Etats-Unis sur leur frères de couleur dans l'Ancien comme dans le Nouveau Monde",⁹ and drew attention to the inability of Negro Americans to see that different problems existed within "la grande famille intercontinentale des Noirs".¹⁰

It is against this intellectual, political and psychological background that the pan-movements in Asia, Africa and the Middle East after 1918 should be studied.¹¹ Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turanism, Pan-Asianism and Pan-Negroism were not the same; what was common to them was their appeal either to religion or to race, and their refusal to be influenced by what they considered alien ideologies.¹² Similar to these movements, but with more concrete demands and operating within a more institutionalised political framework was

8. The Gold Coast Leader, p.4, August 14, 1920.

9. Franck L. Schoell: La Question Des Noirs Aux Etats-Unis (Payot, Paris, 1923), Ch. IX, p.221.

10. Op.cit., p.223.

11. G. Shepperson: "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes". Phylon, vol. 23, 1962, p.353. Also Roberto Michels "Patriotism" in First Lectures in Political Sociology tr. A. de Grazia (Harper Torchbooks, 1965), p.159.

12. Vide Xenia Eudin and R.C. North: Russia and the Far East: 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey (Stanford University Press, 1957); Wilson Record: The Negro and the Communist Party (Chapel Hill, 1951).

the incipient pan-West African nationalist body¹³ - the National Congress of British West Africa.

Thus it was that the South African Native National Congress (Later African National Congress), formed in January 1912 at Bloemfontein,¹⁴ in December 1918 drew up a memorial to the King in which they drew attention to existing grievances. This delegation was composed of Solomon Plaatje, J.T. Gumede, L.T. Mvabaza, R.V. Selope Thema and the Rev. H.R. Ngcayiya. After an interview with Lloyd George they went on to lobby in Versailles where they met other deputations - including that of the South African Dutch-Afrikaner nationalists led by General Hertzog who were lobbying for the creation of a republic in South Africa. The delegation, like its contemporary the National Congress of British West Africa, achieved very little; in fact, it achieved nothing. Almost about the same time, the Pan-African Congress of W.E.B. Du Bois was holding its first session in Paris (1919). The West African National

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13. The Political Awakening of Africa ed. Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, p.43 (Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1965); D.S. Rothchild: Toward Unity in Africa, p.179 (Pub. Affairs Press, 1960).
 14. A forerunner of the National Congress (South Africa) was the Native Convention which met in Bloemfontein in 1909 to discuss the projected union of the four South African provinces. That meeting was attended by African nationalists like Dr. Walter Rubusana an opponent of the co-operationist Tengo Jabavu, John Dube and M. Masisi, vide Edward Roux: Time Longer Than Rope (Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1948), pp. 116-118. The South African Native National Congress had sent an earlier delegation to London in 1914, but it failed to get Parliament interested in the affairs of the Union and in the iniquities of the 1913 Native Land Bill. Members of that delegation included Solomon Plaatje, Dr. W. Rubusana, Dube, Msane and Mapikela - vide Sol. Plaatje: Native Life in South Africa, (London, 1916).

Congress had also been formed in March 1920 at Accra, and had already collected funds to send a delegation to London the same year to petition the King. Little, it seems, was it realised that the Wilsonian principle of self-determination of small nations would cause so much restlessness in the Colonies.¹⁵ Granted that these were self-appointed leaders of a politically conscious minority and in no way representative of the masses, they were nevertheless the proverbial straw that showed how the wind was blowing.

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15. In an interview M. Allegret from Cameroons who was director of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, replied to the question "What is the principle movement among your people?":

"Oh, the cry 'Africa for the Africans'; the desire to guide their own destiny. This is true both of their political life and in the church, too. They want self-determination". Outward Bound, vol. III, No.31, April, 1923, London: p.482.

Sir Frederick Lugard, writing in the Edinburgh Review, stated:

"The educated native of the West Coast has not escaped the glamour of such phrases as 'self-determination of small nations' and the like, and so we hear of a 'West African National Conference', the product of a group of Gold Coast barristers and intelligentsia." Accepting Sir Hugh Clifford's view that the N.C.B.W.A. was unrepresentative of West African opinion, Sir Frederick observed that "The 'Pan-African Conference' in Paris, though suffering from the same defect, passed a set of resolutions which may be described on the whole as reasonable and thoughtful. Their aspirations for a fuller share in the government - albeit confined to a small group - are not without significance as signs of an awakening to a sense of individual and collective responsibility." Sir Frederick, however, had no sympathy for Garveyism:

'The same, however, cannot be said of Mr. Garvey's 'World Convention' in New York, and its wild schemes of a Black Republic for the whole of Africa the echoes of discontent from his (i.e. the African's) race in America, or even more direct incentives from them, may create unrest and trouble. The most serious agitation - because it was racial - is that known as the 'Ethiopian Church Movement' in Natal and Nysaland, formented by Negroes from America. Here indeed is a potential source of unrest.'

F.D. Lugard: "The Colour Problem", The Edinburgh Review, vol. CCXIII, Jan.-April, 1921, pp.275-6.

The idea of a 'West African nationality' did not begin in the 1920's. The history of nationalism in West Africa is full of references to this vague, artificial and imaginary entity. At least one historian in dealing with its wider circle of antecedents, has contended that attempts at West African unification date as far back as the negro 'empires' of the Old Sudan and the Islamic revolutions of the early nineteenth century.¹⁶ Dr. James

16. "The common assumption is that this problem is a new one, the result of our independence from colonial rule. But this view is incorrect. One of the main themes of West African history is integration - by conquest and statecraft, by mutually beneficial mingling of peoples and by the spread of ideas from one region to another.

"The earliest documented examples of the genius of the West African negro for creating larger units out of a welter of smaller ones were the 'empires' of the Old Sudan. The old disposition on the part of some writers to disregard the evidence and to explain the empires in terms of external stimuli is now discredited". During the Islamic revolutions, "An effective system of international relations was in evidence, based on a common official language, Arabic, and on a common ideology provided by Islam. the implications of a common language and a common ideology cannot be over-emphasised. The centralised states thus established were not only brought into closer relationships with one another. Potentially, they represented something new in the evolution of larger units in West Africa. Based on the concept of 'the brotherhood of all Believers', they supplied the sort of cohesive force sorely lacking in either the empires of the Western Sudan or the powerful kingdoms of the Guinea forests. in the new type of state called into being by the jihads, the 'super-tribal ideology' provided by Islam transcended all local ties. The potentialities of such an ideology for the unification of West Africa are obvious." A.B. Aderibigbe: "West African Integration: An Historical Perspective", pp. 9-13. The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, vol. 5, No.1, March, 1963. For a discussion of a similar phenomenon in Europe see Bernard Joseph: Nationality: Its Nature and Problems (London, 1929), pp.162-163. It is interesting to note that L. Sedar Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal, returned to this theme argued by Dr. Aderibigbe of reconstructing the old empires of the Sudan into a West African federation. In 1959, at the birth of the short-lived Mali Federation he said that the object of the Parti de la Federation Africaine was 'the achievement of a French-speaking Negro-African Nation, of which the Federal State, the

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Africanus Beale Horton of Sierra Leone had, as early as 1867, advocated 'the Self-government of Western Africa'¹⁷ in a book which was a combination of West African history and anti-racist polemics against the 'false theories of modern anthropologists'. It was Horton who asserted in 1867:

..... it will be my province to prove the capability of the African for possessing a real political Government and national independence; and that a more stable and efficient Government might yet be formed in Western Africa, under the supervision of a civilised nation.¹⁸

Horton, like the West African middle class of the mid nineteenth century, saw his nationalism in the context of the whole of West Africa; thus he refers in one breadth to 'Iboes, Yorubas, Mandingoes, Soosoos, Joloofs Timnehs, Krew, and Dahomians'. He talks about 'the African Race', preferring to use

16. Contd.] Federation of Mali will constitute the first stage. This is the moment to answer the metropolitans who deny the Federation of Mali the character of a State. If the Nation groups the countries together it is in order to transcend them. It is a determination to construct, or, better still, to reconstruct. The Nation decants the values of the Country and sublimates them by transcending them." He then went on to speak about 'the building of a Western Negro-African nation', to realise, under new conditions, 'the grand design of the Emperors of Mali and Songhai; to link Senegal to the Hausa country and the oases of the Sahara to the Benin Gulf in order to unite the races of the "Sudanese" branch in a vast unity which should be politically and economically viable.'
L.S. Senghor: Constituent Congress of the P.F.A.: Report on the Principles and Programme of the Party (Editions Presence Africaine, 1959), pp. 14-19.

17. James Africanus Horton: West African Countries and Peoples; And The Negro's Place in Nature (London, 1868), p.vii. Also G. Shepperson: "An Early African Graduate", University of Edinburgh Gazette, No.32, Jan. 1962, p.24; Robert July: "Africanus Horton and the Idea of Independence in West Africa", Sierra Leone Studies, New Ser., No.18, Jan. 1966, pp. 2-17.

18. Horton, op.cit., p.2.

'nationality' to 'tribe'. The reason for this may be that while conceding that 'nationality' was a European concept, he was also interested in telling the 'anthropologists' that there were political kingdoms in Africa before the advent of the Europeans.¹⁹ "Examining Western Africa in its entirety", he says, "we find it to be composed of a number of political communities, each ruled by a national Government, formed in many cases of distinct nationalities occupying determined territory; but some national communities are broken up into innumerable fractional sections, governed by rebel chiefs, or satraps; others depend upon a political body whose sovereign chief rules over life and property; and others, again, are under well-regulated civilised government." One of Horton's aims was "to develop among these different nationalities a true political science".²⁰ To him, the self-government recommended for the West African Settlements by the 1865 Select Committee of the House of Commons²¹ was 'a glorious idea', 'a grand conception',²² to be put into practice within a Christian framework and the imperial connexion.²³ It also involved the readiness of the younger generation of West Africans to acquire "knowledge and wisdom, wealth and honesty, great place and charity book-learning and virtue" in order to appreciate 'the principle of public

19. Ibid., Ch. IV.

20. Ibid., p.2.

21. See Report From the Select Committee on Africa (Western Coast), 26 June, 1865, vol. 5.

22. Horton, op.cit., p.68, Pt. II: "African Nationality".

23. Ibid., p.273.

interest', so that "their interest and that of their Government will not clash, but become identical; and then would it more fully appear that there is no such thing as the real interest of a government 'contra-distinguished from the real interest of a community; no such thing as the interest of a community contra-distinguished from the real interest' of the country".²⁴

By far the most important and most influential theoretician and prophet of Negritude and Pan-Africanism in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century was Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden.²⁵ One need only to examine the contents of the West African nationalist press from the 1870's to the late 1920's and the references made to this distinguished Negro, to appreciate the impact of his social and political thinking on his age. History, as E.H. Carr has reminded us, is not only concerned with the success of great men; it is also concerned with the impact of other great men, whose thought was in advance of their generation.²⁶ Though he was neither a leader of men nor the type of nationalist dreaded by the colonial administration, he exercised an influence which many nationalist intellectuals would envy: "In West Africa his

24. Ibid., pp. 276-277.

25. Hollis R. Lynch: Edward Wilmot Blyden, Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912 (London, O.U.P., 1967); Edith Holden: Blyden of Liberia (Vantage Press, 1966). Robert W. July: "Nineteenth Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden", Journal of African History, 1965, vol. V, 1964, pp. 73-86.

26. E.H. Carr: What Is History?, p.55 (Penguin, 1961). F. Znaniecki: 'History has preserved mainly the names of leader-thinkers who have left writings or to whom later writers have ascribed certain intellectual achievements'. The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge, p.72.

influence among nationalists in the first three decades of the twentieth century was direct and pervasive, and was most obvious in their efforts at establishing a British West African Federation, in their search for better and increased educational facilities, and in their attempts to foster pride in African history and culture. It was J.E. Casely Hayford who most actively carried on Blyden's work²⁷

Blyden was not only the 'ideological father of the idea of West African unity';²⁸ he also spearheaded (alongside Bishop James Johnson) the cultural nationalism that accompanied it. Contrary to popular notions, Negritude did not begin in Paris or Harlem in the 1920's and 30's; most of the seeds of this intellectual revolt of colonised man against European civilisation can be traced to the equally important "Back to Africanism" movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. And this revolt, it may be added, owed little to outside philosophical influences. It was very largely the work of Blyden, Bishop James Johnson, Mojola Agbebi, J.E. Casely Hayford and the Rev. Orishatuke Faduma of Sierra Leone. No doubt, the new interest in African historiography pioneered by W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter Woodson, J.E. Bruce and Arthur Schomburg in the United States created some interest in West African intellectual circles,²⁹ but this must not blind us to the movement

27. Hollis R. Lynch, op.cit., p.249.

28. Ibid., p.250; H.R. Lynch: "Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist", Journal of African History, VI, 1965, pp. 373-388.

29. George Shepperson: "The African Abroad or The African Diaspora". Paper read at the International African History Conference, Tanzania, 1965, pp. 9-10; also published in African Forum, 1966, Vol. 2, No.1, Summer, 1966, pp. 76-91. "The African Diaspora - or The African Abroad".

from the inside and to its reciprocal aspects. For example, the Rev. Orisatuke Faduma, alias James Davies, of Sierra Leone, of whom more later, had studied divinity at Yale University where he also had the opportunity to study Islamic history. His cultural and ecclesiastical nationalism was increased in America. In 1896 we find him attending the conference on Africa at the Gammon Theological Seminary and criticising missionary work and Christianity in Africa on lines well developed by Blyden and Bishop James Johnson.³⁰ After teaching in North Carolina from 1898 to 1913, in 1913-14 we find Faduma acting as the ideologue of Chief Alfred Sam's unsuccessful African Movement, which was a colonisation scheme to settle Negro American families on the Gold Coast. Bishop James Johnson, as we have noted in chapter II, gave his blessing to this movement. The movement towards 'Africanity' and the name changing which took place in Freetown in the first decade of the twentieth century was largely the work of people like Orishatuke Faduma.³¹ This movement continued throughout English-speaking West Africa up to the 30's and beyond. In his study of the West African press between 1918 and 1939, W.D. Edmonds observes:

30. J.W. Bowen ed., Africa and the American Negro: Congress on Africa (Atlanta, 1896) "Religious Beliefs of the Yoruba People in West Africa", pp. 31-36; "Success and Drawbacks of Missionary Work in Africa by an Eye-Witness", pp. 125-136; E.A. Ayandele: The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 (Longmans, 1966) p.246, especially Ch. 8.

31. C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, p.468. I am grateful to Mr. Fyfe who has drawn my attention to the life and work of Rev. Faduma and his contribution to cultural nationalism in Sierra Leone. The contribution of the Rev. Faduma to Sierra Leone and West African nationalism will be discussed in the section on the Sierra Leone branch of the National Congress Movement.

The claim that West Africans formed a distinct, racial entity was one of the main reasons for the very existence of a newspaper press in British West Africa in the midst of its passionate and prolonged campaign to convince Africans that contact with Europe was crushing African originality and that, to save themselves, they should revert to African ways of life, and thereby build a truly native culture and civilization, the newspaper press found time to point out that if European civilization had defects it had, equally obviously, some advantages. Therefore press attacks on 'Europeanization' were modified by the suggestion that there should be an eclectic approach to the 'back to African culture' problem. In short, there should be 'Africanisation' and adaptation of Western civilization rather than slavish imitation or wholesale rejection.³²

Most of the nationalists associated with these newspapers had either known Blyden personally or were acquainted with his pan-Negro and Africanist writings.³³

After Blyden's death in 1912, J.E. Casely Hayford his ideological heir revived the West African dream, this time giving it organisational form. It was between 1913 and 1915 that the idea of a pan-West African meeting was first conceived.³⁴ In early

32. W.D. Edmonds: The Newspaper Press in British West Africa 1918 To 1939 (Bristol University M.A. Thesis, 1951), p.113.

33. H.R. Lynch, op.cit., p.250.

34. Ruth Perry argued that as far back as 1904 The Lagos Standard called for such a conference: R. Perry: A Preliminary Bibliography of the Literature of Nationalism in Nigeria (1956), p.5. Dr. Akiwande Savage, who originated the idea with J.E. Casely Hayford puts the date between 1912 and early 1917, Times of Nigeria, 28/3/20. He was certain, however, that it was in 1912 and early 1913 that The Gold Coast Leader, on whose editorial staff he was, started a propaganda campaign for a West African conference. The campaign was joined by Lagos and Freetown newspapers in a concerted bid to sell the idea, The Lagos Weekly Record, 26/6/1920, p.6. See also The Gold Coast Leader, 7/9/1912 and 11/1/1913. David Kimble in A Political History of Ghana does not seem to be certain about the origins of the Congress. As early as 1911, Casely Hayford had referred to the 1905 Gold Coast Pan-African Conference held under the auspices of the G.C.A.R.P.S. as the "prototype of the kind of African National Assemblies which must be called into being in the near future for the solution of African questions" Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation, (London, 1911) pp.182-183. Sir Leslie
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1914, Casely Hayford and Dr. Akiwande Savage of Nigeria who was then practising in the Gold Coast, sent circulars from Sekondi to influential people in Lagos, Freetown and other parts of the Gold Coast, inviting their opinions on the subject of a West African conference and suggesting that such a meeting was overdue.³⁵ In early 1915, Casely Hayford and Dr. Savage wrote to the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society concerning "the question of the proposed West African Conference which appears to be engaging the attention of several public men throughout West Africa", adding:

So far the consensus of individual opinion would seem to indicate the great desirability of such a Conference being held with as little delay as possible.

We shall be glad of your co-operation and of all assistance you can give in making the scheme a success.³⁶

(II)

"Dream of Unity"³⁷

..... this great pioneer of the forward African movement has something to say on an African League of Nations. You know after the war there is going to be an European and American League of Nations ... Why should there not also be an African League of Nations ... with the same object i.e. to safeguard against all hooligans, whatever their pretensions, those sacred rights mankind has been at such sacrifice and pains to

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34. Contd.] M'Carthy, one of the participants in the movement puts the date at late 1913 - La Ray Denzer: The National Congress of British West Africa: Gold Coast Section. M.A. Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1965., p.26, Ch. 3.
35. The Lagos Weekly Record, 26/6/20, p.6.
36. A.R.P.S. files, Cape Coast Regional Archives. File No.92, 197/65. Casely Hayford and Akiwande Savage to the Secretary, Gold Coast A.R.P.S., Hamilton Hall, Cape Coast, 26/5/1915.
37. The sub-title is taken from Claude Welch's: Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa (Cornell, 1966.).

secure, pledged to boycott as to raw materials any so-called civilized nation, which attempted to resort to the rule of force and to disturb the peace of the world?³⁸

For Casely Hayford, as for most of the early West African nationalists, 'British West Africa' existed before 'Gold Coast', 'Sierra Leone' or 'Nigeria'.³⁹ This identification of the part with the whole was to continue up to the depression of 1929 and the 1930's when a narrower conception of nationality became dominant.⁴⁰ The educated West African urban 'middle class', from the Sierra Leonean diaspora of the nineteenth century to the late 1930's, had more in common, and exchanged views more freely, with their counterparts along the coastal towns than with their brethren in their own hinterland.⁴¹

38. The Gold Coast Leader, 19/10/1918, p.3.

39. D. Kimble, op.cit., pp. 374-375.

40. For example The Gold Coast Leader, 26/9/28, asserted:
 "This idea of a Gold Coast Nation is a fundamental one."
The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 27/10/28, also declared:
 "Whatever may be said to the contrary Sierra Leone is our country, and our requirements and advancement should obtain full consideration."

It is interesting to learn, however, that between 1918 and 1939 "no really considerable body of evidence is to be discovered in the newspapers to suggest that the press did not consistently view matters from a wider, West African point of view rather than from the point of view of individual colonies".
 W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., p.128.

41. D. Kimble, op.cit., pp. 374-375. There were, of course, a few outstanding exceptions, including Casely Hayford, to this attitude. The earliest of these was Edward Blyden who wrote:

The civilised centres of Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Liberia are hardly in touch with the aborigines, as these settlements were founded by Africans foreign to the localities, who, out of touch with the indigenous inhabitants could hardly be welded into one with them. Some of them, owing to the smattering which they received of European culture, thought themselves better and wiser than their aboriginal ancestors Hence came weakness, decay, inefficiency and general sterility." E.W. Blyden: Africa and

Having been told that they had no history worth taking seriously, and conscious of the fact that their own socio-economic group had limited opportunities in colonial society, it is perhaps not surprising that the nationalist intelligentsia came to prefer a visionary 'West African nationality',⁴² to a State in which they had no voice and which, in any case, was alien and therefore, in their view, oppressive.⁴³ In fact, Gold Coast newspapers never

41. Contd.] the Africans: Proceedings on the occasion of a Banquet August 15th, 1903 to Edward Blyden by West Africans in London (London, 1903), p.43. For a discussion of Blyden's ideas on nation-building in a developing society see the article by H.S. Wilson: "The Changing Image of the Sierra Leone Colony in the works of E.W. Blyden". Sierra Leone Studies, No.11, 1958, pp. 136-148.

In the Gold Coast, the Rev. S.R.B. Attah-Ahuma protested that the Gold Coast was a nation because it had a history and an indigenous system of government: The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness (Liverpool, 1911), quoted in D. Kimble, *op.cit.*, p.524.

42. The report on the federation of the British West African Colonies (1939), dismissed the idea of a West African Nationality as a 'theoretical abstraction', and a unitary state of British West Africa as 'an artificial creation', adding that 'It is only recently that the Africans, e.g. Nigeria have begun to acquire a consciousness of political unity as "Nigerians": to superimpose the idea of unity as "British West Africans" would set back the present healthy growth of Colony-pride". GAMBIA 3/360. Conf. M.P. No. 2535, 14/12/39: "Committee appointed to consider closer union between the West African Colonies", Gambia Records Office.
43. Sir Bernard Joseph: *op.cit.*, pp. 324, 133 states: " the doctrine that nationality and state must be co-terminous is entirely erroneous and unfounded in fact where a nationality is carved up between several states it will ordinarily seek to achieve political unity of its own"

Hannah Arendt, writing in a different context, says of pan-movements:

"Hostility to the state as an institution runs through the theories of all pan-movements, the state by its very nature was held to be alien to the people." The Origins of Totalitarianism (George Allen and Unwin, 1958), pp. 237, 231-232. Also Edward Shils: "The Intellectuals in The Political Development of the New States", pp. 206-207 in Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries: Nationalism and Communism ed. John H. Kautsky (John Wiley, N.Y., 1962); Roberto Michels, *op.cit.*, pp. 160-162.

tired of denouncing alien rule:

The greatest misfortune that can befall a nation is when it is ruled by an alien Power not chosen by the people themselves Alien Governments never prove successful Unfortunately for Africa the self-determination applied to the little States of Europe or its modified form as applied to the peoples who had lately been under Turkish misrule was not applicable.⁴⁴

Another editorial observed:

The introduction of the British system of Government in place of the one existing before was an encroachment which no self-respecting nation would allow.⁴⁵

In spite of all this objection to 'alien rule', there was never any mention of severing relations with the colonial Power; alien rule was bad but there were good reasons for consenting to it: it was better to demand more opportunities for a particular social group and make moderate demands than to do away with alien rule completely; and one could still be 'free', 'under the Union Jack'.⁴⁶ Even Herbert Macaulay, regarded by the administration as the gadfly of Lagos politics, could speak sincerely about the 'manifold blessings of Pax Britannica'. The National Congress of British West Africa, for example, declared

44. The Gold Coast Leader, 3/5/1919.

45. Ibid., 3/5/1919; also John Plamenatz; On Alien Rule and Self-Government (Longmans, 1960), pp. 1-2 and 84 below.

46. See the interesting article by Ali A. Mazrui: "Consent, Colonialism, And Sovereignty", Political Studies, vol. XI, 1963, pp. 37 - 39, 50. The notion of a 'free colony' is also discussed by Dr. B. Duala-M'Bedy in his paper read at the West African Political Science Conference at Ibadan University, March 4-6, 1965: "Theory and Politics in Africa And The New States (The Significance of Voegelin's Thought)", pp. 4-5. Also R. Delavignette: Freedom And Authority in French West Africa (London, O.U.P., 1950), pp. 22, 24, 20-31.

That the policy of the Congress shall be to maintain strictly and inviolate the connection of the British West African Dependencies with the British Empire, and to maintain unreservedly all and every right of free citizenship of the Empire and the fundamental principle that taxation goes with effective representation to aid in the development of the political institutions of British West Africa under the Union Jack and, in time, to ensure within her borders the Government of the people by the people for the people; to secure equal opportunity for all, to preserve the lands of the people for the people⁴⁷

To take two more examples of this attitude to the Empire from the press. In May 1920 The Colonial and Provincial Reporter (Sierra Leone) was of the opinion that:

The great ideal before us is the distant one of West Africa as a self-governing state in the British Commonwealth of Nations.⁴⁸

The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter asserted:

We hold that the British Constitution is sufficient to meet our needs as a people destined to grow and develop. We therefore resolve to maintain our attachment to the British Empire We advocate autonomy within the British Empire.⁴⁹

Within such a framework, it is not surprising to find Casely Hayford vigorously advocating the pan-Africanism and negritude he inherited from Blyden and at the same time couching his political demands in legalistic and constitutional language. It is this mentality which leads Padmore to conclude, a la Mannheim,

47. Paras. 17-19 of The Constitution of the National Congress of British West Africa: Passed by the Second Session of the National Congress Held at Freetown, Sierra Leone, January-February, 1923. Also, p.9 of the Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa Held at Accra, Gold Coast from 11th to 29th March, 1920.

48. The Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 1/5/1920.

49. The Gambia Outlook and Selegambian Reporter, 29/8/1931.

Judged in terms of his social background and the period in which he lived and worked, Casely Hayford was undoubtedly the greatest national political leader and social reformer West Africa had yet produced. His political faults were the common failings of his class. Born in 1866 and educated under Nonconformist middle-class influences, he reflected all the virtues and political limitations of mid-Victorian liberalism⁵⁰

What did Casely Hayford mean by 'West African Nationhood' or 'United West Africa'? The concept, as has been pointed out, is an artificial one.⁵¹ He himself never clearly defined it; it was the sentiment behind it, rather than any clear-cut programme of

50. G. Padmore: The Gold Coast Revolution (London, 1953), p.52. Of Casely Hayford's leadership Magnus Sampson wrote:

If there was a man who was critical of 'Colonial Rule' or what is sometimes described as 'The Crown-Colony System', that man was Casely Hayford; yet it is equally true that Casely Hayford had great admiration for the proverbial British Justice and Fairplay either due to his own deep-rooted belief in British principles or to the international recognition of British Fairplay. It was because he felt like the American woman who came to England by adoption; who so clearly saw the faults and foibles of England, and yet who by closer understanding grew to love England That is why Casely-Hayford preferred the British Colonial policy with all its imperfections to the French policy of assimilation." Sampson referred to Casely Hayford's "gift of moderate and creative leadership", praising him as one who desired "practical progress". He continued:

"..... why do I believe in Casely-Hayford as a moderate type of leader? It is because throughout history the moderate leader has invariably become the most formidable, in fact far more formidable than any fanatic, for he has behind him not only the powers of emotion but the powers of thought". Magnus J. Sampson: "Casely-Hayford And The Idea Of A United British West Africa". Cape Coast Regional Archives, W.E.G. Sekyi Papers, 715/64, lecture delivered at the New Year School at Adisadel, Cape Coast, 4th January, 1952. The theme of the colloquium was The Changing Gold Coast.

51. D. Kimble, op.cit., p.374. For a general discussion of similar concepts see the perceptive essay by Ali A. Mazrui: "On The Concept 'We Are All Africans'", The American Political Science Review, vol. 57, 1963, pp. 88-97.

national unification that gave the idea wide currency. The appeal to race and to collective disabilities found ready acceptance along the coast.⁵² According to Magnus Sampson

..... Casely Hayford always thought in terms of Nationhood of British West Africa as distinct from Self-Government. That was the dominating political philosophy of his. It is significant that this remarkable man of vision drew a line of demarcation between 'Nationhood' his favourite term and 'Self-Government' which may mean just political power without the prerequisites that go to make a self-sufficient and self-reliant Nation. Thus Casely Hayford did not believe in the new doctrine "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you", because he knew as a wise man that mere power constitutes a strong temptation to selfishness As a great leader of men he saw that one touch of nature had made British West Africa kin. The common threat to our ancestral lands had made British West Africa one - one in danger, one in safety. It was the view of Casely Hayford that Africa would always be Africa both in Church and State.... He thought also that the methods of the pioneers of civilisation among us were peculiar. They were even dangerous because they tended to destroy African nationality.⁵³

Like most visionaries in politics, there was an element of unreality in his pan-West African dream. Yet he was regarded by contemporaries as 'the greatest man of action to whom the Gold Coast has given birth'.⁵⁴ It was primarily because his ideal sought to "transcend history"⁵⁵ that it commanded the attention of the West African

52. J.E. Casely Hayford: The Truth About the West African Land Question, pp. 101-103 (London, 1913); United West Africa, (London, 1919) passim. For the reception of the latter book, which was launched to coincide with the Accra Conference, see The Times of Nigeria, 17/5/1920, p.4, which, in a review of United West Africa exhorted its readers: "It is time that we should rise above that mean spirit which thinks that because we have different political opinions therefore we must become sworn enemies to each other and seek each other's ruin Unity must be the watchword and patriotism the principle We must strive for a United West Africa"

53. Magnus J. Sampson, op.cit., pp.4-7. See also Casely Hayford's article in WASU, No.2, pp.23-28, 1926: "Nationalism As A West African Ideal".

54. Magnus J. Sampson, op.cit., p.2; Aurora (Sierra Leone), 30/4/1921, p.8.

55. Sheldon S. Wolin: Politics and Vision, pp. 18-20 (London, 1961).

intelligentsia; it was mainly because it was so "unreal" that it became a necessary complement to action.

His Pan-Negro philosophy had been stated as early as 1911 in his Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation. United Empire (October, 1911), in a review of the book, described it as 'a study in the self-realisation of the negro'. But like Sir Hugh Clifford, it went on to say that Hayford was applying his ideas to 'a continent where races are innumerable, and nations, as we understand the term, do not exist'. The review added, however, that West Africans were thinking 'upon lines that are at present foreign to European methods of thought retaining all that is good in native institutions, and preserving fundamental laws and customs that are part and parcel of the national consciousness'. As is well known, John Edward Bruce attributed much of Hayford's Pan-Negro views expressed in this book to the intellectual influence of Edward Blyden; Blyden himself referred to the work as 'an inspiration'.

After Blyden's death we find Casely Hayford actively propagating the idea of West African unity. He described his widely-read The Truth About the West African Land Question (London, 1913) as a work 'hopefully inscribed to United West Africa', and preached unity and nationalism in its pages.⁵⁶ As Dr. Blyden^{III} has argued, Casely Hayford was a co-operationist and a constitutional nationalist.⁵⁷ When he spoke of 'united West Africa', he meant not only unification

56. The Truth About the West African Land Question (London, 1913), pp.101-103.

57. New Nations in a Divided World ed. Kurt London (Praeger, 1965), contribution by Dr. Blyden^{III}, pp.149-150.

of most of the administration of British West Africa, but also recognition of the principle of elective representation and of 'African nationality' or 'individuality' within this imperial framework. As he himself put it in 1913:

In 1903 United Nigeria had not been thought of. What is there to prevent United West Africa of the near future? It may seem presumptuous for an African to have any views upon the matter. It may appear more so to advance them..... We in West Africa are ardent imperialists. But our imperialism is tempered with common sense..... What, then, of united West Africa?..... will British policy in West Africa be one of repression, or one that will give free scope to the individuality of the people?..... We believe in British Imperial Africa⁵⁸

In tracing the origins of the NCBWA, the West African nationalist press, in spite of its shortcomings,⁵⁹ provides a useful guide to 'public opinion' on the idea of a West African inter-territorial movement. In his useful study of the West African press between 1918 and 1939 Edwards concludes:

..... the press seems to have been devoted to the cause of fostering and promoting a spirit of nationalism and supporting the political, economic and social aspirations which were the inevitable corollaries of such growth." Though there were minor differences on emphasis, "the general attitude remained unchanged and strongly in favour of those who were claiming for their people racial peculiarities and distinctions making for political separateness, and the right for an immediate and substantial increase in native participation in public service leading to an ever increasing degree of political autonomy..... The sentiment most often appealed to, the creed most systematically taught, the reason for publication most boldly advanced, the cause most constantly defended, and, perhaps one of the words most frequently used, was nationalist (sic)..... Nationalism formed the very *raison d'etre* of the press in British West Africa. This was, naturally a somewhat

58. J.E. Casely Hayford, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-12.

59. W.D. Edmonds, *op.cit.*, pp. 6-27, 43, 259-266.

vague, indefinite impression, an amalgam of all those sentiments and ideas expressed in so many ways by different newspapers.⁶⁰

Most of the influential nationalists of this period were closely connected with some of these newspapers. In fact, Casely Hayford had been a journalist from the 1890's; he took over the Western Echo which was owned by his uncle, James Brew of Dunquah during the latter's absence in Europe between 1888 and 1915, and re-christened it The Gold Coast Echo in which he advocated municipal government.⁶¹ He was also associated with the nationalistic Gold Coast Leader. J. Claudius May of Freetown, another influential figure in Freetown politics and in the Congress movement, owned the moderate but well-produced and widely circulated Sierra Leone Weekly News; Beoku-Betts owned The Aurora which flourished briefly after a fiery start in 1919; Kobina Sekyi wrote extensively in various Gold Coast papers; Dr. Akiwande Savage who originated the Congress idea with Casely Hayford, later owned The Nigerian Spectator in Lagos. 'Professor' Adeoye Deniga and the Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell, both active members of the Lagos Committee of the N.C.B.W.A., frequently contributed to various Lagos newspapers, Deniga became the editor of the 'radical' Lagos Weekly Record in August, 1918; E.F. Small of the Gambia founded and edited The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter in 1930.

60. Ibid., pp. 76-77. For the role of the press in the development of nationalist sentiment see Sir Bernard Joseph: op.cit., Ch. IX, p. 146.

61. Magnus Sampson: A Brief History of Gold Coast Journalism (Winneba, July 1934), p.13. For an account of the Brew family (with which Casely Hayford was connected) and its participation in nationalist politics see Margaret Priestly's "The Emergence of an Elite: A Case Study of a West Coast Family" in The New Elites of Tropical Africa (O.U.P., 1966) ed. P.C. Lloyd, pp. 87-100.

As we have already noted, the newspapers of the period under review frequently spoke about a vague geo-political entity which was usually referred to as 'United West Africa'. This term in fact formed the title of some of the nationalist tracts written by well known West Africans. For example, Casely Hayford's widely read United West Africa (London, 1919); Ladipo Solanke's United West Africa (or Africa) At The Bar of the Family of Nations (London, 1928); Dr. J.A.B. Horton had written West African Countries and Peoples and The Political Economy of Western Africa in the 1860's. Then too there was J.W. de Graft Johnson's Towards Nationhood in West Africa (1928). There were other variations: J.C. Zizer, an ardent supporter of the Congress movement, called his Lagos newspaper The West African Nationhood which, he stated, supported the programme of the N.C.B.W.A. and was not interested in 'party politics'. After the Accra Conference in 1920, the Congress planned to publish a newspaper to be called The West African National Review, but this was never published. The idea persisted in the depression of the 1930's even though its practicability was being questioned;⁶² for example, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of the modern exponents of Pan-Africanism, named his popular paper The West African Pilot in 1934 and stated in full his Pan-Negro philosophy in Renascent Africa (Accra, 1937). Even as late as the 1950's one could come across brief references to this idea: the late Alhadji Adegoke Adelabu, that colourful figure in Nigerian politics, wrote a tract called Africa In Ebullition (Ibadan, 1952) in which he

62. A.G. Hopkins: "Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast 1918-1939", Journal of African History, vol. VII, I, 1966, pp. 150-151.

declared:

Nigeria is too small for my vision. My ideal is a West African States Union, stretching from the banks of the Gambia to the shores of the Congo in panoramic beauty and unparalleled grandeur.⁶³

In 1955 Dr. Chike Obi, mathematician and politician, advocated what he called Kemalism and 'regimental government', in the course of which he referred to a 'Greater West Africa' as 'ideal from overwhelming considerations'.⁶⁴ Last, but by no means least among the distinguished theoreticians and prophets of West African unity is Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who stated in 1953 that West African unification was his "basic personal philosophy".⁶⁵ The writings of Dr. Nkrumah on this subject are extensive.⁶⁶ The West African National Secretariat he set up with Wallace Johnson, Ashie Nikoi and others in London in 1946, and his little-known Kumasi Congress of 1953 were as we shall show, conscious attempts to revive and extend the ideals of the N.C.B.W.A.

The longevity of the pan-West African idea is illustrated by the fact that as late as 1945, long after the N.C.B.W.A. had been relegated to the scrap heap of history, a section of the Gold Coast

63. Alhadji Adegoke Adelabu: 'Africa In Ebullition' (Ibadan, 1952), p.76.

64. Chike Obi: Our Struggle: A Political Analysis of the Problems of the Negro Peoples Struggling for True Freedom (1955), p.23.

65. Quoted in D.S. Rothchild: Toward Unity in Africa (Washington, 1960), Ch. X, p. 184; see also pp. 182-188. Bankole Timothy: Kwame Nkrumah: His Rise to Power (London, 1963), pp. 32, 51, 59-60, 172. Kwame Nkrumah: The Autobiography (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 43-44.

66. K. Nkrumah: Toward Colonial Freedom (London, 1946), Africa Must Unite (Heinemann, 1963), Chs. 15 - 17, 21.

nationalist intelligentsia, which included W.E.G. Sekyi, Dr. Nanka Bruce, Dr. J.B. Danquah, the Hon. G.E. Moore, the Hon. Akilagpa Sawyerr, A.M. Akiwumi and K.B. Ateko, sought to revive the same movement.⁶⁷ The Hon. I.M. Garba-Jahumpa of the Gambia, who was a delegate to the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress, and was associated with George Padmore and Dr. Nkrumah, states that "For West Africa it (i.e. the year 1945) marked the revival of the idea of the West African National Congress of the early 1920's".⁶⁸ As E.F. Small was, in a sense, the political mentor of Mr. Jahumpa, it is not surprising that the latter has inherited the pan-African tradition.

Between 1916 and 1937, the idea of a "Federated British West Africa" was the subject of extensive editorial comment. Making allowance for the pessimism engendered by the depression of the early 1930's,⁶⁹ on the whole the scheme was viewed favourably. To

67. See Ch. IX.

68. Personal communication from the Hon. I.M. Garba-Jahumpa, Member of the Gambia House of Representatives, 17/11/66.

69. For example The Sierra Leone Weekly News which had always been enthusiastic about the idea, wrote in 1931: "We are of the opinion that Federation at this stage of the development of West Africa will be a distinct disadvantage", The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5/7/31. The Gold Coast Independent combined idealism with realism when it counselled in 1937: "Before examining this plan (for a central government for the four colonies) we wish to make it clear that we still see nothing in the idea to make us wholly antagonistic to it, yet it must be equally understood that we advise no hasty decision in a matter which must so profoundly affect the rate of progress and the destinies of the individual territories and their inhabitants." The Gold Coast Independent, 23/1/37. As usual the conservative Nigerian Pioneer, which was never certain as to what the rate of political development should be, and was more pre-occupied with the division and disunity of West Africa, was hardly enthusiastic about the idea. As early as 1921, reiterating Sir Hugh Clifford, it argued, in language that would have pleased the realist school of politics, that

quote Edmonds once more:

It was sometimes a kind of vague Pan-African movement. Only very occasionally was there talk of a Gold Coast nation or a Sierra Leonean or Nigerian nation, but very commonly there was an appeal to British West Africa, or West Africa, or even just Africa. Time and time again, while reading the editorials and articles, when the words 'Gold Coast', or 'Nigeria' might have been anticipated the words 'West Africa' were actually used..... There was about the idea a kind of hazy nationalist-intellectual appeal.⁷⁰

Following the call to action by Casely Hayford and Dr. Akiwande Savage, the West African newspapers began to campaign for a West African Conference in earnest as early as 1916,⁷¹ but very little was done by way of organisation up to the end of 1917. By 1918, Sierra Leone had moved from the private committee stage and had endorsed 'the great scheme' at public meetings, appointing a committee to plan the organisation of the local branch and to consider subjects to be discussed at the projected conference.⁷² The meeting in Freetown, held at the Wilberforce Memorial Hall on April 29th, 1918, was called by a circular letter sent by the Hon. J.H. Thomas, editor of The Sierra Leone Weekly News, who called attention to the important part Conferences or Congresses had played in other parts of the world in presenting a 'united front'

69. Contd.]

"If common object, idea and interests are essential to National claims, how can Nigeria with its innumerable tribes and claims, and its divers idiosyncrasies combine in this great and most important affair? Nigeria must reject the invitation and cannot profitably associate with the movement of the National Congress of West Africa for obvious reasons. We have a Yoruba Nation and a Hausa Nation but so far we have no Nigerian Nation." The Nigerian Pioneer, 15/4/21; also 26/4/29. See also A.J. Hopkins, op.cit., passim.

70. W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., p.125.

71. See The Gold Coast Leader, 3/8/1916.

72. Ibid., 3/8/1918.

upon general grievances and needs; and pointed to the activities of the South African Native Congress "which had already won some concessions on the segregation policy of the Union Government, which seeks to restrict the Aborigines to the most undesirable portions of what originally were their lands", and the work of the Indian National Congress which was "an object-lesson of great value inasmuch as by its instrumentality the numerous racial and religious divisions and differences of the vast sub-continent are easily bridged over and the voice of its teeming millions effectively and unitedly heard."⁷³ The isolation of any colony, The Gold Coast Leader argued, meant its inability to secure redress of grievances. "Therefore", it concluded:

..... it is obviously desirable that the several West African communities should tend to a closer union such a union would give greater weight to a public opinion distinctively West African. We can get on common ground on various vital questions political, social and economic, and gain strength by making common cause. While meeting on such common ground there will be no reason why there should not be certain questions distinctively local and reserved for local treatment⁷⁴

Among the subjects proposed for common discussion by The Gold Coast Leader were taxation and representation, equality of opportunity in the civil service and other professions irrespective of colour, the land question, a West African university (here attention was drawn to the new Bantu university at Fort Hare, South Africa, created through the efforts of D.T. Jabavu) and a united opposition to the projected Empire Resources Development Board.

73. Ibid., 4-25/8/1918.

74. Ibid.

The editorial concluded by calling for 'a united West African front'.⁷⁵ Earlier in 1918, the Leader had suggested that transport problems would make it difficult for an inaugural committee composed of delegates from each territory to draw up a provisional programme for the whole movement, the Sierra Leone and Lagos ad hoc committees should nominate a Sierra Leonean or Lagosian residing at Accra to meet representatives of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society and other Gold Coast members of the Legislative Council so that a draft programme could be prepared and then submitted to local committees in the four territories for approval or modification. F.W. Dove, a Sierra Leonean businessman resident at Accra was suggested for Sierra Leone, as he was "quite in touch with Sierra Leone local feeling and politics". After ratification of the preliminary programme, it was hoped that each local committee would set to work in educating public opinion about the aims of the movement. It was also suggested that Accra, "being the most central for all the different Colonies", should be the meeting place. Each territory was to finance its own delegation.⁷⁶

Another editorial of the Leader contained comments ranging from hardships caused by British monopoly of West African shipping and its effects on cocoa prices, to observations on civil rights in America and 'the inconsistency of drawing the colour line in an age in which the broadest humanity is supported by the Stars and

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., 2/2/1918, pp. 3-4; also The Gold Coast Leader, 29/10/1917; 9-23/2/1918, p.4; 4-5/5/1918; 31/8/1918; 3/8/1918; 21/9/1918. The Lagos Standard, 5/6/1918.

Stripes, the Union Jack, and the Tricolour".⁷⁷ The incipient inter-territorial movement also came under review:

..... the proposed West African Conference is the burning question of the hour. The matter has passed from the region of suggestion to that of practical politics, and Committees have been formed in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast to prepare the ground for the coming Conference.⁷⁸

In his chapter on the Congress movement in the Gold Coast, Kimble refers to West Africa's 'time honoured comparison (i.e. of the N.C.B.W.A.) with the Indian National Congress';⁷⁹ while such comparison was not wholly accurate, it must be remembered that the West African nationalist press itself made the comparison several times, particularly when dealing with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in India. As one editorial put it:

In approaching the important subject of Indian Reforms to-day our object is not so much to consider the proposed reforms in detail as to draw attention to some significant parallels in the political retrospect of India and West Africa, noting, however, certain points of difference more or less in favour of West Africa as to necessary reforms.

The editorial went on to state that in both India and West Africa Western education had produced a group of people with western ideas of democracy and who were demanding the application of such ideas to their own countries; and that in both areas the necessity of

77. The Gold Coast Leader, 28/9/1918, p.3. One interesting feature in the West African press between 1918 and 1939 was the constant bitter attack on racial discrimination within the British Empire, in the United States, and the fear of the 'East Africanisation of West Africa'; white rule in South Africa came under severe attack. With this attitude went a sustained campaign in defence of African society and culture against 'Europeanism'. An eclectic approach to this question was recommended: vide Edmonds, op.cit., pp. 78-123.

78. The Gold Coast Leader, 28/9/1918, p.3.

79. D. Kimble, op.cit., p.402.

political movements for the attainment of such demands had become evident. It counselled, however, that the projected West African Conference should not use some of the extreme methods of the Indian National Congress; its methods should be "purely constitutional".⁸⁰ The Gold Coast Independent drew a more relevant analogy when it argued:

There are nearly forty or more different languages spoken in India. Dialectic differences are counted in the hundreds. Yet it is possible to institute a congress where all the educated element of India could voice their national aspirations in a common language..... We can think and act in English, though we may be Gas, Twis, Fantis, Yorubas or Hausas. Our histories are different as are our temperaments, but we have a common destiny, and a common goal in our political and economic existences.⁸¹

Between 1919 and 1920 press support for the projected conference reached a new peak. In March 1919, The Sierra Leone Weekly News was of the opinion that "the proposed British West African Conference, if materialised, would be of great advantage to the West African colonies".⁸² The same paper declared in 1921:

"The description given by Europe to the word Nation may not apply to us. But if the name is inapplicable the thing is there. From Nigeria to Sierra Leone we are one people and what applied to one portion applies to the other."⁸³

The Gold Coast Leader, which led the campaign to popularise the conference movement, summed up:

80. The Gold Coast Leader, 7/12/1918, p.3.

81. The Gold Coast Independent quoted in The Gold Coast Leader, 21/9/1918, pp. 3-4.

82. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 8/3/1919; also Sierra Leone Weekly News for 6/3/1920, 29/5/1920, 26/6/1920.

83. Ibid., 12/3/1921.

So accustomed has the public mind become to the idea of a united British West Africa that it is quite the fashion now politically, economically and educationally to speak of British West Africa as a whole.⁸⁴

The rhetorical columns of the outspoken Aurora called with its usual fervour:

Let the soul of the people vibrate to the tune of relief.... we pray for this body politic, this central political body from whose winged borders we look for the bursting forth of a dazzling light emitting the potential sparks of freedom and freedom only.⁸⁵

Another paper observed:

One lesson above all others which the results of the late world upheaval have taught the African races is the need for organising an African Brotherhood.⁸⁶

The Gold Coast Leader put the matter very simply:

"We like the phrase "United West Africa".⁸⁷

But the radical Lagos Weekly Record, under the editorship of Thomas H. Jackson, one of the local congress officials, was not to be outdone; in verse equal to its prose it exhorted:

Come join ye blacks with unity
'Tis up to you to show
The sons of white community
Thy manhood not laid low.
With unison your might will come,
Let all thy racial pride
Burst forth, as doth the morning sun
On life's great seething tide.
Outwit them in their spheres of life
And care not what they say
Since words do only end in strife,
Plod on and win the day⁸⁸

84. The Gold Coast Leader, 28/6/1924.

85. The Aurora, 1/10/21; also 31/12/21.

86. The Times of Nigeria, 1/3/1920.

87. The Gold Coast Leader. 28/6/1924.

88. The Lagos Weekly Record, 28/9/1920.

(III)

By the middle of 1919, most of the territorial committees of the N.C.B.W.A. had been organised, and funds were being collected to send delegates to the projected conference at Accra. Meanwhile, after corresponding with the various committees, the Gold Coast Section had assumed a co-ordinating and directing role of the whole movement. In early 1919, with its focus on Versailles, it drew up a declaration, which was sent to the other committees and British West African governors. The declaration, which was unmistakably the work of the lawyers, read:

Whereas by the grace of God the great struggle between Might and Right has ended in favour of Liberty and Justice AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the voice of West Africa should be heard at the Peace Conference as to the disposal of the late German Colonies which West African blood and treasure have aided in recovering for civilisation AND WHEREAS the return of those to Germany would be a perpetual menace to West Africa and an opportunity for reprisal and revenge on the part of Germany upon the peoples of such Colonies who by their sacrifices have won an indefeasible title to the lands of such Colonies and the peaceful occupation thereof AND WHEREAS for these among other reasons we deem it absolutely desirable and necessary that the German Government should be entirely excluded from every part of Africa AND WHEREAS we consider the Liquor traffic an evil which should be suppressed in West Africa AND WHEREAS on this solemn occasion it is desirable that there should be placed on record the great and urgent needs of West Africa which we seek for ourselves and for our people with particular reference to free institutions and the security of the lands of the peoples and the products thereof from passing under alien control or from being exploited in any way AND WHEREAS we the undersigned as representing the advanced and enlightened opinion of West Africa in our several communities constituted several committees for the purpose of a British West African Conference for the consideration among others of reconstruction problems as affecting West Africa. NOW BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED 1. That we respectfully and humbly object to and oppose the handing back to Germany or any other power for Germany of any of her former African Colonies upon the grounds stated in the preamble.

2. That for the same reasons and humbly object to and oppose the return of Germany as Government to any part of Africa WHATSOEVER.

3. That whatever other Powers or Governments shall hereafter exercise rule or authority in West Africa, the right of Natives of West Africa to an effective voice in their own internal affairs be recognised and conceded by the granting of free institutions and the exercise of the franchise.

4. That the immemorial Customary rights of the people to their ancestral lands be recognised and conceded and in no way interfered with or undermined under any circumstances or excuses whatever.

5. That the liquor traffic be totally abolished throughout West Africa.

6. And that copies of these resolutions be cabled respectively through the Governor of each of the West African Colonies or Protectorates to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies and through him to the Prime Minister to President Wilson and to each of the Allied Powers.⁸⁹

The above resolution was prompted by a telegram on December 24, 1918, from Robert Broadhurst, secretary of the newly formed African Progress Union in London. The telegram read:

African Progress Union inaugurated. American President brings to Peace Conference Negro Adviser for African Questions.⁹⁰ Union urge your Conference to approach Colonial Office through Governor to adopt similar step forthwith.

T. Hutton-Mills wrote to Dr. Akiwande Savage of Nigeria, stating that the telegram from Broadhurst had been submitted by Casely Hayford for the consideration of the various territorial committees, and

89. F.V. Nanka Bruce, Secretary of the Eastern Province Section of the British West African Conference to the Private Secretary, Christianborg Castle, Accra, 14/2/1919, p.3. Correspondence Relating to the National Congress of British West Africa, ADM. 5/4/19. G.N.A.; also undated draft resolution in Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, 4/1/1919 - Letters of the National Congress of British West Africa, Ibadan University Library.

90. Probably a reference to Professor ~~_____~~ of ~~_____~~ University, ~~_____~~. R.R. MOTEN
TUSKEGEE

that the Gold Coast Conference Committee had, 'after careful, serious, and anxious consideration with him, come to the conclusion that in view of the urgency of the matter no time should be lost in despatching the enclosed resolution by cable through each of the Governors of the West African Colonies, and through him to the Prime Minister, President Wilson and each of the Allied Powers at the Peace Conference', and that they (the Gold Coast Section) were now submitting their proposal for consideration, amendment or alteration by the Lagos Committee, though the substance of the resolutions should be as identical as possible. When agreement was reached, all the telegrams were to be sent simultaneously on the agreed date in January 1919. The letter added:

You will no doubt perceive the urgency of the matter, as the Peace Conference will soon be sitting, and we will have missed the golden opportunity for ever if we are not in time. It is considered that the meeting of the Conference should not be delayed beyond March next, and that Accra being central, might be the place of the meeting, your views are invited upon this also. We are addressing similar letters to each of the other Committee.⁹¹

The resolution of the Gold Coast Section was submitted to the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford who, as usual, replied that he wanted to know:

a. By what process of appointment or selection the "Gold Coast Section of the projected West African Conference" was formed or constituted;

b. The nature of the mandate, if any to speak in the collective name of the Chiefs and Tribal Communities of the Gold Coast which this Body claims to possess; and

91. T. Hutton-Mills, President Accra Committee, F.V. Nanka Bruce and C.H. Fird (President of the Secondee Committee) to Dr. Akiwande Savage, Secretary of the Nigerian (Lagos) Committee, 4/1/1919; Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 11: Letters of the N.C.B.W.A., 1920. Ibadan University Library.

c. How, if the Conference, in which it is implied that the Gold Coast is about to take part, is as yet only "projected", it is possible at this stage to put forward Resolutions which that Conference would as yet apparently have had no opportunity to discuss or endorse.⁹²

Hutton-Mills replied that the N.C.B.W.A. was 'composed of several of the most enlightened and educated people of the Gold Coast' and that some of the Principal Chiefs served on its Committee. In a sentence as nebulous as Hobbes's covenant, he argued that these Committees were 'appointed by Resolutions at public meetings at which both the literate and illiterate classes of the Communities were duly represented'.⁹³ Reflecting the growing social and economic status of the educated and professional class in traditional society and in relation to the Chiefs whose authority the administration was increasing, Mills also argued that 'the educated and enlightened community of the Gold Coast in presenting any prayer for the redress of grievances, for needed reforms, as subjects and citizens of the British Empire, do not require the mandate of all the Chiefs..... they, the educated classes themselves, form a substantial and influential and integral part of the people of the Gold Coast.....'. He also explained that the resolution Sir Hugh was worried about was the result of the co-operation of the various West African committees.⁹⁴ The petition of the Freetown Creoles

92. C.M. Holme, Private Secretary, to the Secretary, Eastern Province Section of the Committee of the Projected West African Conference, Jamestown, Accra, 17/2/1919, p.4: Correspondence Relating to the N.C.B.W.A., op.cit.

93. For this 'Committee of All' theory of representation, see the discussion by Bertrand De Jouvenel in The Pure Theory of Politics (C.U.P., 1963), pp. 131-138.

94. The Nigerian Pioneer, vol. VI, No.264, 31/1/1919; draft resolution in Macaulay MSS. IV, 11, 4/1/1919; Correspondence Relating to the N.C.B.W.A. G.N.A. ADM. 5/4/19, pp. 8-9.

to Lord Milner in connection with the rice and anti-Syrian Riots of 1919, was also included in the correspondence with Sir Hugh.⁹⁵

While the Allied Powers were meeting at Versailles to decide the destiny of Africa, and were setting up an international organisation which, among other things, was supposed to oversee the mandated territories and to be the guardian of the principle of trusteeship, certain Africans on the west coast of Africa had decided among themselves that they too were educated enough and civilised enough to take care of their interests and their destiny within the British Empire. At Versailles, the African question was discussed and settled from an imperial and European point of view,⁹⁶ but these Africans, inspired by the idealism of one of the principal figures at Versailles, had adopted or rather, extended, the new principle of self-determination to their own condition. In fact, they already had some utopian ideas about 'an African League of Nations'.⁹⁷ In March 1920, mainly through the efforts of the Gold Coast Section, the Conference of Africans of British West Africa, composed of forty-five delegates,⁹⁸ met at the Accra

95. Correspondence Relating to the N.C.B.W.A., pp. 53-60, G.N.A.

96. G.L. Beer: African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference (N.Y., 1923).

97. The Gold Coast Leader, 19/10/1918, p.3.

98. Allister Macmillan: The Red Book of West Africa (London, 1920), p.140. E.J.P. Brown, Nana Ofori Atta and Dr. Akiwande Savage were noticeably absent; apart from the Ga Manche (Paramount Chief of Accra) and Manche Kojo Ababio, only W.E.G. Sekyi turned up in traditional dress. D. Westermann puts the number of delegates around fifty: "Ein Kongress Der Westafrikaner", Koloniale Rundschau, 1920, p. 164.

Native Club. The Conference lasted from 11th March to 29th March. At the Conference the financing of a deputation to England was discussed; £25,000 was considered necessary for the purpose. On the very first day of the Conference about £10,000 was subscribed; T. Hutton-Mills, the President, subscribed 1,000 guineas and the Gold Coast Section £10,345. It was then decided to increase the Congress inaugural fund to £100,000.⁹⁹

This important Conference in the history of pan-Africanism attracted wide attention both in Africa, London, and as far afield as the West Indies (Trinidad).¹⁰⁰ Deidrich Westermann, a sympathetic observer, remarked that this unique gathering was more than a flash in the pan:

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99. Westermann, op.cit., p.166; R.E. Dennett: The West African Congress and Government on Native Lines (The African World publication, 1920), p.5. S.O. Akiwumi, T. Hutton-Mills, H. Van Hein, the Ga Mantse, Prince Ata Amonu and J.E. Casely Hayford would have been the principal donors. The co-relation of wealth and social status with office holding in the Congress has already been commented on in the sections dealing with the territorial committees of the N.C.B.W.A.
100. The Gold Coast Times, 15/9/1931, p.11, correspondence between S.R. Wood, General Secretary of the N.C.B.W.A. and Charles Taylor of Port of Spain, Trinidad, and the Negro Progress Convention of Georgetown, Demerara, British Guiana. Charles Taylor, editor of the Trinidad Nationalist even suggested establishing a branch of the N.C.B.W.A. 'in the western world' to 'work in co-ordination with Congresses on your side, and at certain times meet either here or on your side for round-table conferences'. In fact, a branch of the N.C.B.W.A. was established in Trinidad in October 1930 for 'the larger advancement of the African race ... [and] a more intimate knowledge of, and contact with, our Fatherland - Africa -'. See also The West African Nationhood, 9/4/1931: "The Negro Voice and Activities the World Over: The West Indies and the Congress of British West Africa". It is important to note that C. Fredericks, the president of the Georgetown Negro Progress Convention, had also attended the London session of the 1921 Pan-African Congress and may have met some of the African participants.

'The territorial separation of the four colonies and their partly differing conditions and interests will always be a serious impediment to an impressive people's movement.... In any case the relevance of this first congress of the West Africans should not be underestimated; doubtless it is a milestone in the development of the negro race. Who would have thought it possible twenty years ago that negroes from distant parts of West Africa would come together to discuss seriously and with dignity the problem of their political future; that they would be able to raise millions of Marks for purely idealistic purposes! The general opinion was, that a feeling of national cohesion has either never been present among negroes or has been destroyed a long time ago by the influence of colonial powers.

To-day we realise, that in the coloured race a new feeling of community is awakening, a feeling which has been made possible only by the influence of the colonial powers; it is the same education, the same language, the same views which they learned from the nation of their masters; the hard, externally benevolent, but in reality suppressing treatment, intended to exploit them, which asked for protest and made them form a bond of unity The negro knows that among European values too not all that glitters is not gold. That means not at all a rejection of all things the white man has to bring him. He wants to make use of European values in order to reach his own ideals. He wants to employ the things he can learn from the Europeans so as to become a true, self-assured African.¹⁰¹

Duse Mohammed Ali's pan-coloured Africa and Orient Review waxed eloquent on that occasion:

..... We have all along said that unity among West Africans is an essential to commercial and political prosperity it is unthinkable that a Native of Sierra Leone should be accounted a foreigner on the Gold Coast or in Nigeria, and vice versa.

This being an age of combinations of one kind or another, it behoves the coloured people of the world to show a solid front. There must no longer be the question of a coloured foreigner in the country of other coloured men. All non-Europeans are labelled "niggers" by Europeans; coloured peoples being therefore in the same political and economic ship, it is extremely ludicrous for men of the same ethnographic stock to regard each other as foreigners.

101. D. Westermann, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

Whether or not there were semantic difficulties inherent in the concept of 'we are all Africans', the Africa and Orient Review did not care to know; as far as it was concerned, the simple act of bringing 'leaders of West African thought' together was more important than scholarly disputations about the elements of nationality.¹⁰²

In West Africa itself, the convening of the Accra Conference gave a wonderful opportunity to the budding poets of the nationalist press to try out their Edwardian metres. One such poet entitled his work An Epoch and saw it fit to begin it with a pan-African preamble:

Be it noted that Africa is the only continent the interests of whose peoples are identical in that they are geographically united, while from an ethnological point of view they are of one race. The rise or fall of one of her many peoples, therefore, affects all the others. It goes without saying that her inward greatness and consequently her outward recognition is locked up in one word: UNITY. Individualism, selfishness, and such like monopolistic tendencies may thrive elsewhere, but to Africa they have been known to be her bitterest enemies The writer sees in a vision a day, be it to-morrow or some centuries to come, when persons representing all the different peoples of Africa and every interest that is in that continent will meet on a common platform, and plan to work out their own salvation which can only be done by themselves.

He then warmed to his theme:

'Fall in, ye great and glorious Ethiop's sons! -
Fall in and this occasion hail with joy!
Come all from where great Phoebus' course he runs,
And let your joys be simple, ne'er to clog.

This is that long-appointed time, indeed.
Come forth ye kiths from other lands afar!
Trot out, and show the wider world your need,
And stand for aye united, ne'er to jar.

.....
Come, tune your lay, and Afric's glory peal!
Make this a day of gala full of glee.

102. Africa and Orient Review, May, 1920.

Come, meet and think! - ane meeting e'er be leal (sic)
To think you're men and brethren ever free.

Shake hands and smile ye Western sons of light,
Now wreck'd because some aliens hold the sway!
Speak, that your wrongs in status be set right,
And take your place as freer souls to-day.

Let North and South, and Eastern lands as well,
Come, join in one and Afric's great deeds tell;
For time has come to strike out once again

Who knows, but what, if central Afric home
Some day to come a meeting place would be:
Your tongues to tang a grander scheme to come,
And hail a day of gladness yet to be.

O, that the time will hasten, and anon
You'll hold your place as owners, not as slaves;
Your home your own, from plund'rer's grasp you've won,
One aim, one flag, thy children freed from knaves.¹⁰³

At the Conference it was decided that its policy would be: 'to maintain strictly and inviolate the connection of the British West African Dependencies with the British Empire, and to maintain unreservedly all and every right of free citizenship of the Empire and the fundamental principle that taxation goes with effective representation.'¹⁰⁴

On the first day (11th March) they discussed legislative, elective representation, equality of opportunity based on merit and regardless of colour, and the establishment of a West African University along the lines proposed earlier by E.W. Blyden and Pope Hennesy in the 1880s. On the constitutional side, the most important resolutions were:

103. The Gold Coast Leader, 31/1/1920, p.4.

104. National Congress of British West Africa: Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa. Held at Accra, Gold Coast, From 11th to 29th March, 1920, p.9.

2. That this Conference recommends a Constitution on the following lines: (1) An Executive Council as at present composed. (2) A Legislative Council composed of representatives, of whom one-half shall be nominated by the Crown and the other half elected by the people, to deal with Legislation generally. (3) A House of Assembly, composed of the members of the Legislative Council together with other financial representatives elected by the people, who shall have the power of imposing all taxes and of discussing freely and without reserve the items on the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure prepared by the Governor in the Executive Council and approving of them.

3. That each British West African Community shall have the power of electing members to both the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly through such local groups as may be found most convenient and expedient, and that where indigenous institutions do not provide a ready means of ascertaining the will of the people, other qualifying method of voting, such as property or an Educational standard, shall be resorted to....'

5. That this Conference desires to place on record its disapprobation of the invidious distinctions made in the present West African Civil Service by reason of colour, and is of the opinion that all future entries should be based on merit by competitive examinations, and pledges itself to submit proposals thereanent (sic) at the proper quarter.'

6. That Municipal Corporations with full powers of local self-government be established in each principal town of the British West African Colonies, and that of the members of such Municipal Corporations four-fifths shall be elected by the rate-payers and one-fifth nominated by the Crown, and that such elected and nominated members have the power of electing the Mayor of the Corporation, who however must be an elected member.¹⁰⁵

On educational reforms, the Conference advocated a British West African University 'on such lines as would preserve in the students a sense of African Nationality', the appointment of African and other educationists by the various Boards of Education, to give advice on reforms, 'guided by the experience of such communities as Japan which have encountered similar problems to that of West African Communities', and that each section of the N.C.B.W.A. should

105. Ibid., p.1.

start a National Educational Fund, 'so as to ensure the development of a National Educational Scheme', and also promote schemes for secondary education 'on national lines supported by the people'. They also recommended:

That compulsory Education throughout the British West African Colonies be introduced by law, and that the standard of both the Primary and the Secondary Schools be uniformly raised to meet the Standard of the University.¹⁰⁶

On the second day they discussed 'Alien Problems with Particular Reference to the Syrian Question', the much disliked Empire Resources Development Committee, and important problems of banking and shipping which directly affected the interests of the African merchant class, the produce merchant and the middleman who were experiencing great difficulties because of post-war fiscal and economic controls and the growing power of extra-territorial firms. It is interesting to note that in their desperation the Conference, influenced by the merchants, and by approaches of Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. through the Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell, resolved:

That this Conference, being of the opinion that Trade competition in the British West African Dependencies should be free from restriction, views with great dissatisfaction the passing of the Palm Kernels Export Duty Ordinance..... That, in view of the difficulties hereto experienced in the matter of space on British bottoms by legitimate African Traders and Shippers, this Conference welcomes competition in the shipping line with particular reference to the 'Black Star Line'.¹⁰⁷

On the third day the Conference dealt with legal reforms affecting all the four territories, especially the establishment of a West African Court of Appeal. They also resolved to set up

106. Ibid., p.2, Resolutions 2-7.

107. Ibid., p.3, Resolutions 2 and 5.

a West African Press Union in recognition of 'the important part the Press plays in National Development'; a committee of experienced journalists was to look into the problem of better co-ordination of the press policy of the English-speaking West African press. It was also proposed to start an official organ of the N.C.B.W.A., under the editorship of J.E. Casely Hayford, and financed by the Congress Inaugural Fund, to be called the British West African National Review.¹⁰⁸

At the fourth sitting of the Conference, sanitary and medical reforms were thoroughly dealt with, and highly technical papers read by Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright of Sierra Leone; they also dealt with residential segregation of races and the position of African doctors in government service. The eternal and important land question was also discussed, with the Conference tartly declaring:

'That in the opinion of this Conference the principle of Trusteeship with respect to the lands of the people of British West Africa has been overdone, and that it is proper to declare that the average British West African is quite capable of controlling and looking after his own interests in the land.'¹⁰⁹

The fifth sitting dealt with 'The Right of the People to Self Determination', after hearing a paper read by E.F. Small of the Gambia. After the usual declaration of its 'unfeigned loyalty and devotion to the throne and person of His Majesty the King-Emperor', the Conference went on to state:

That the Conference views with alarm the right assumed by the European powers of exchanging or partitioning Countries between them, without reference to, or regard for, the wishes of the people, and recodes the opinion that such a course is tantamount to a species of slavery.

108. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

109. Ibid., p.7, Resolution 1.

That this Conference condemns specifically the partitioning of Togoland between the English and the French Governments and the handing over of the Cameroons to the French Government without consulting or regarding the wishes of the peoples in the matter.

That it respectfully desires an assurance from His Majesty's Government that under no circumstances whatsoever will it be a consenting part to the integrity of any of the four British West African Colonies, being disturbed.

It was also at this sitting that the Conference resolved itself into the N.C.B.W.A.¹¹⁰ Finally, the Conference discussed the representation of West African views in London by the N.C.B.W.A. delegation which was to proceed to London late in 1920. The delegation was empowered to seek the aid of solicitors in London on the question of elective representation and on other reforms, and 'to take such preliminary steps and undertake such propaganda work, and to do all acts necessary and expedient' to achieve their various goals.¹¹¹

At this point, it will be in order to remark on the political attitude of the N.C.B.W.A. delegates. As we shall show in our analysis of their social and occupational background, in chapter IV, the leadership had inherited the possessive individualism of Western liberal democracy, particularly some of its Victorian tenets - laissez-faire, the idea that knowledge meant power, belief in progress and the natural harmony of interests, as well as the belief that 'ordered liberty' and property went hand in hand. They

110. Ibid., p.8, Resolutions 1-3. Resolution 3 was mainly prompted by Gambian fears of cession to France: see J.D. Richards: "Gambia and France", West Africa, 8/12/1917, p.762. In 1923 France again approached Britain for exchange of the Gambia for French Somaliland, but the offer was rejected principally because of the recovery of Gambia's trade and because 'public opinion' in the Gambia was opposed to any cession.

111. Ibid., p.9, Resolutions 1-2.

were pan-Africans but not revolutionaries; to them Marxism was 'Bolshevism' and Bolshevism was bad. It was precisely that political theory which Sir Hugh Clifford claimed was the monopoly of Anglo-Saxons that these men were now using to reinforce their demands. As the Lagos Weekly Record tells us, the leaders of the N.C.B.W.A. '..... were quite conversant with the history of political or philosophical thought from Aristotle to Bergson.... [and] were already deducing disquieting doctrines from the political philosophies of Herbert Spence (sic) and J.S. Mill and the popular tenets of Modern Socialism..... which they were applying most vigorously to the solution of the manifold problems of colonial administration in West Africa'.¹¹² The Lagos Weekly Record may

112. The Lagos Weekly Record, 19/2/1921. Sir Hugh Clifford, a Roman Catholic aristocrat, one of the most ardent exponents of 'the White Man's Burden', and a great admirer of Kipling, was of the opinion that 'good government' was much better than 'self-government', and was particularly impatient with English 'liberal-minded philosophers and enlightened academic theory'. According to Sir Hugh:

'Democratic self-government, as we understand it, is a conception of Greek origin..... and it must be regarded as the distinctive fruit of European and, in a special degree, of British political genius. Recently, with the world-wide spread of European ideas and influence, the minds of certain classes of men in many parts of the non-European world have become infected by this alien bacillus, very much as the bodies of thousands throughout the tropics have received from white men the phthisis germs..... Persia, Turkey, China has each in turn essayed, in recent years, to establish parliamentary institutions modelled upon those of Europe; and in India, in Egypt and in Ceylon similar experiments are in progress. The results will only be capable of just appraisal, "far on in summers that we shall not see"..... the inspiration from which these political movements derive their force is of an origin as distinctively exotic as are the phthisis bacilli to which I have likened it..... it is as contagious in the realm of ideas as are the latter in the physiological sphere, and..... it is no less incapable of control.....'. Sir Hugh continued, 'When, however, we get back to the more primitive peoples, we find ourselves still among non-Europeans who, taken in bulk, have

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have exaggerated, but it is probable that half the lawyers connected with the movement had read either the Greek and Roman classics or J.S. Mill; at least one of them (W.E.G. Sekyi), nicknamed during his student days in London as the 'G.B. Shaw of West Africa', could be assumed to have been conversant with the literature of English socialism. Yet Sekyi was no blind admirer of English democracy: his London master's thesis was concerned with political obligation in Akan society; he was as much concerned with elective representation as with the protection of Ghanaian political institutions against the corrosive influences of alien systems.¹¹³

112. Contd.] never entertained the exotic conception of self-government; who find it an idea impossible to grasp; and who indeed are whdly incapable of governing themselves..... In the Southern Provinces [Nigeria], "self-government" would mean a recrudescence of savage superstition, accompanied by universal lawlessness.....': Sir Hugh Clifford: "The Story of Nigeria", paper read at the West African Section of the British Empire Exhibition (Lagos, 1924), pp. 31-33. I am grateful to Mr. Christopher Fyfe for drawing my attention to this pamphlet, the speech gives some insight into Sir Hugh's attitude towards the 'educated Native' and to representative institutions within the non-white Empire. But Sir Hugh never confused race with nureaucracy and imperialism, vide H.J. Hulgalle: British Governors of Ceylon (Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Colombo, 1963), Ch. XXIV. This chapter contains some interesting accounts of Sir Hugh's beliefs and personality.

113. See the plan of Sekyi's thesis in the Sekyi Papers and his unpublished manuscript The Parting of the Ways (n.d., probably 1927). In his perceptive remarks in 'Authority, Progress, and Colonialism', Wolfgang H. Kraus argues that the nationalist intelligentsia 'have learned to give at least symbolic or formal deference to the mores and auctoritas of their tradition; but not so much that it would prevent them from borrowing from the no longer so alien West whatever is vital to their task of founding and developing. Yet, here too, they must be circumspect lest it appear that they are indiscriminate imitators of alien authority and its values. When, a number of years ago,

[Contd.]

113. Contd.] a West African political organisation [the N.C.B. W.A.] demanded the election of representatives to serve in legislative councils, it wished to have this point clearly understood: in demanding the franchise, it stated, the people of West Africa are "not asking to be allowed to copy a foreign institution", rather, they wish to preserve and apply the principles of elective representation traditionally used in the family and tribal order of West Africa.' AUTHORITY, NOMOS I, ed. Carl J. Friedrich (Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 155-156. For Kobina Sekyi's equally cool attitude to Padmore's revolutionary anti-colonialism see Samuel Rohdie: "The Gold Coast Aborigines Abroad", Journal of African History, vol. VI, 1965, No.3, pp. 389-398. Commenting on the so-called marginality of the West African intelligentsia and its 'near caricature of Victorianism', K.E. De Graft-Johnson argues:

'..... it must be clear that these descriptions [i.e. of the West African colonial elite] are exaggerated. Few of the intelligentsia were completely alienated or detribalized. Indeed, many played prominent roles in their extended families, and in the public life in their home towns. Some, like Sarbah, Casely Hayford, Sekyi, and Danquah, devoted time and energy to a study of native institutions and folklore while they copied western ways and played about with western ideas, they none the less articulated grievances against the British..... It is they who spearheaded the movement to nationhood..... Behind all these symbols and practices was more than mere imitation. The notion of racial inferiority often plagued and irritated the intelligentsia. Their response to western culture was partly, therefore, an attempt to prove ability to absorb the best that the West could offer. At the same time self-interest during the colonial period dictated a pro-western orientation.....' 'The Evolution of Elites in Ghana', pp. 109-110 in The New Elites of Tropical Africa, ed. P.C. Lloyd (O.U.P., 1966). For another view, see Martin Wight's The Gold Coast Legislative Council (Faber and Faber, 1946), pp. 182-184:

'The core of independence or intransigence among the intelligentsia is provided by the Cape Coast school. For the most part their opposition is for opposition's sake, and if sometimes they chance to voice the naive and genuine grievances of the man in the street, these are politically marginal. The Cape Coast school display most vividly the inconsistencies in the aims of the intelligentsia. Sometimes they hope for the rapid decay of native administration and the replacement of native custom by the ballot box..... At other times they uphold the sacrosanct immutability of native law and custom..... He (i.e. Mr. Sekyi) is the outstanding example of a tragic and unresolved conflict, desiring to be at once Christian and pagan, aboriginal and European, Akan traditionalist and Western progressive.....'. Wight seems to infer that this characteristic was peculiar to the Gold Coast nationalist intelligentsia: in fact, as Mannheim has shown, it is characteristic of all intelligentsia; see K. Mannheim: Essays on the Sociology of Culture (ed. Ernest Mannheim and Paul Kecskemeti, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), pp. 91-170.

It is also worth noting that the N.C.B.W.A. leaders saw themselves as the only class of people who, by virtue of their social and occupational status, were qualified to control by constitutional means, what hysterical racists like Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant called 'the rising tide of colour against white supremacy'. Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright informed the League of Nations Union on October 8th, 1920:

It should be observed that the organisers of this movement are neither fanatics nor recalcitrants to the British throne.... They are of that particular class of peaceful citizens who apprehensive of the culminating danger resulting from the present political unrest in West Africa - an unrest which is silently moving throughout the length and breadth of that Continent, and who also appreciating the fact that the present system of administration will inevitably lead to a serious deadlock between the "Government and the Governed" decided to set themselves to the task of ameliorating this pending disaster by putting forward constitutionally a programme, the carrying of which into operation will alleviate all pains and misgivings since the inauguration of these Committees [the N.C.B.W.A. Committees] there has been some calm amongst the extremists and a decision to await the result of this movement..... We have not come over here with the intention of making any noise; we do not believe in unconstitutional principles or the principles of Bolshevism. We have been under British environment for over two hundred years and we desire to work on constitutional lines. Although we have frequently been described as Black Englishmen, yet we have no intention of losing our race individuality..... You have difficulties at present in India. You have tried to give satisfaction to Egypt and Ceylon.... you have at present troubles in Ireland, but believe me, when I tell you with all seriousness that if this political unrest does not come to a standstill, in West Africa, you will have greater difficulties with West Africa..... and it is because we do not want to encourage such unrest, it is because we want to live under a peaceful government that we who represent the intelligentsia and the heterogeneous mass of the populace, have come to this Country with the object of educating public opinion to our condition by placing our grievances before you and at the same time seeking for the necessary reforms.....¹¹⁴

114. The National Congress of British West Africa: Report of the Proceedings held in London between the League of Nations Union and the Delegates of the National Congress of British West Africa, pp. 6-10.

It is important to clarify the attitudes of the leaders of this movement in view of a recent tendency either to read the nationalism of a later period into an essentially bourgeois movement or to pay insufficient attention to the important fact that the interests of the colonial bourgeoisie generally coincided with, and were in fact protected by, the foreign rulers they were agitating against. Although they claimed to speak in the name of 'the people', the interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie were not identical with those of the people; in fact, it was the contradictions within the colonial system itself that they sought to harmonise in order to protect and expand their own interests without upsetting the system; hence their constitutionalism and their recognition of the benefits of the Pax Britannica. Their pan-Africanism apart, their main objective was the acquisition of representative institutions to protect their socio-economic interests and to enhance their opportunities in colonial society.¹¹⁵

115. See also E.J. Hobsbawm: The Age of Revolution (Mentor Books, 1964), pp. 176-177, Wolfgang H. Kraus, op.cit., pp. 154-155; and the useful essay by Martin Kilson: 'Nationalism and Social Classes in West Africa', The Journal of Politics, May, 1958, pp. 368-387.

CHAPTER IVTHE TERRITORIAL COMMITTEES OF THE N.C.B.W.A.:

Before dealing with the inauguration of the National Congress movement at the Accra Conference in March, 1920, it may perhaps be useful to give a brief account of the organisation, politics and personalities and problems of the local committees of the movement. One of these committees has already formed the subject of a thesis;¹ accordingly, what is done here is to review the local committees in their wider context and at the same time to highlight the peculiar characteristics of the units of this interterritorial movement.

(I)

THE GAMBIA SECTION

The Gambia was the last of the four English-speaking West African colonies to organise a local branch of the National Congress movement. As in Sierra Leone, the local committee was dominated by middle class Creoles, although active Muslim members included Sheikh Omar Fye, who played a leading role in local politics up to the early 1950's and was a leading spokesman of the Muslim community in Bathurst. Other Muslim members were Njagga Saar, a local carpenter; Omar Jallow, described as a 'prominent agriculturist'; Amar Gaye Cham, vice-president of the 1923-24 local executive committee and a dealer. Creoles active in the

1. Miss La Ray Denzer, op.cit.

local committee came largely from the mercantile and legal professions: Isaac J. Roberts who was president of the 1925-26 committee, was a prominent solicitor of Sierra Leone descent. He was a merchant before going to England to read law; he practised in Bathurst and Lagos despite the loss of his eyesight which occurred during his student days in England. He represented the Gambia at the Lagos Session of the N.C.B.W.A. in 1930. He died in Freetown in April 1933 at the age of eighty-two.² M.S.J. Richards, one of the vice-presidents of the 1923-24 local executive committee was a local trader; J.A. Mahoney (later Sir John Mahoney and Speaker of the Gambia House of Representatives, 1960-62)³ was formerly a Government employee who later worked for the French firm C.F.A.O. as a mercantile clerk; the Hon. S.J. Forster, first president of the local committee came from a distinguished Creole family and served for several years on the Legislative Council;⁴ J.E. Mahoney was the nephew of S.J. Forster and was also a trader. B.J. George, local secretary of the committee from 1921 to 1923, and delegate to the Freetown Session in 1923 was a commission agent; Henry M. Jones was a wealthy trader and was one of the Gambian delegates to the N.C.B.W.A. London committee in 1920-21; until the 1921 slump and the depression of the 1930's, 'Pa' Jones was

2. The West African Nationhood, April, 1933; A. Macmillan: The Red Book of West Africa (London, 1920), p. 294. He was born in 1851 at Freetown; studied at Collegiate School of the Rt. Rev. Dr. James Johnson; he came to Bathurst in 1877.

3. The Gambia News Bulletin, July 1966, obituary; West Africa, 4/7/53, p. 605: 'The Gambia's 'Speaker' - J.A. Mahoney'.

4. For the career of this distinguished lawyer see GAMBIA 3/198, file on the Hon. S.J. Forster, the Gambia Records Office; also Macmillan, p. 294.

influential in both business circles and in local politics.⁵

Other prominent Creole traders associated with the local committee were E.F. Small, the Herbert Macaulay of colonial politics in the Gambia and delegate to the Accra Conference and the London committee; E.A.T. Nicol, E.J.C. Rendall and E.N. Jones.⁶

The Gambia committee came into being through the efforts of Mr. I.J. Roberts, to whom J.E. Casely Hayford and Professor Orishatuke Faduma of Sierra Leone had written towards the end of 1918. According to Roberts, the two gentlemen wrote "asking whether any movement has been made in Bathurst towards furthering the aims of this project, and assuring me that the West African Conference was to secure for West Africa a recognition of those social, political and national rights which the representatives of Great Britain in the Colonies have not infrequently denied us."⁷ Roberts replied, promising "to stimulate local interest in the matter".⁸ It was not, however, until early March 1920, after the Accra Conference had resolved itself into the N.C.B.W.A. that he "at once began a propaganda to gain adherents to our cause"; "unfortunately", he adds, "my efforts did not meet with that measure of success which I had expected".⁹ He succeeded, however, in getting the support of some influential members of the Bathurst Community, so that by the end of 1920, with the co-operation of

5. There is a profile of him in A. Macmillan's The Red Book of West Africa, p. 292.

6. J.A. Mahoney, Secretary of N.C.B.W.A. (Gambia) to the Acting Colonial Secretary, 31/10/23, GAMBIA 3/46, file No. 498. G.R.O.

7. Welcome Address to the Overseas Delegates by I.J. Roberts, Esquire, President Gambia Section, December 1925. G.R.O.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

men like E.F. Small, S.J. Forster and H.M. Jones, he was able to form the nucleus of the Gambia branch of the Congress.¹⁰ The version of the Accra Central Committee of the projected West African Conference¹¹ has it that it was the Gambia Native Defensive Union which resolved itself into a local committee of the congress "for the purpose of negotiating on Gambian affairs", adding that it was the aim of the Accra Conference "to centralise native thought and native interests: in fact, to unite together peoples of the same race and country into one compact nation".¹² The Gambia Native Defensive Union which was a rather ineffective pressure group, had no known political aims. It was a society of Government clerks, both Gambians and Sierra Leoneans, which was formed during the war to negotiate for higher wages at a time when the rise in food prices was causing hardship among several sections of the population. On the whole, its aims and objects were to look after the welfare of 'native' civil servants in the Colony. Officialdom saw it, not as 'a political concern', but as 'the local native counterpart of the West African Civil Servants Association, which started about the same time'.¹³

10. Ibid.

11. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 11/10/1919, p. 9.

12. Ibid., also The Gold Coast Leader, 6-13/12/1919 quoted in Denzer, op.cit., p. 40.

13. GAMBIA, 4/11, Secret Minute Paper No. 63, 26/4/1922. The Hon. Colonial Secretary to The Travelling Commissioner, Karantaba, MacCarthy Island Province. According to B.J. George, a Committee of Gentlemen, with the Hon. S.J. Forster as president, formed the nucleus of the Bathurst local branch of the congress: B.J. George, Secretary Bathurst Section to B.P.E. Bulstrode, 30/8/1923, GAM. 583/23, File No. 2/575. G.R.O.

Unlike the difficulties the Gold Coast Section had in capturing the leadership of the Gold Coast A.R.P.S., it was relatively easier for the congress organisers to take over the existing organisation of the Gambia Native Defensive Union, although E.F. Small, one of the most active organisers of the local movement refers to the difficulties encountered in mobilising local support for the Gambia Congress Committee:

"..... the delay in getting the Mass Meeting has put back my plans. I am glad to say that, after some unnecessary rowing, it came off successfully. By a most practical demonstration, the people have, in a gathering of upwards of 300 inhabitants endorsed the acts and resolutions of the Conference." Commenting on the internal affairs of the Gambia local committee and on the Congress movement as a whole, Small added:

I do not know what you would feel that the Hon. S.J. Forster has vacated his seat as Chairman of the General Committee. Cecil Richards Esqr. has been elected permanent chairman as so many of our own people who were nominated seem to be afraid of superseding Forster. But the movement continues to progress." The Gold Coast, he said, had planned to raise £80,000 towards the Congress Inaugural Fund; Nigeria £20,000, and Sierra Leone £10,000. The Gambia committee was "setting to work in full earnest to see what we can do to see us on a sound financial basis....."¹⁴

Like most educated Africans who agitated for constitutional reforms, Small was, in the eyes of the colonial administration, worse than an agitator. An official described him in 1937 as "this self-appointed champion of non-existing grievances felt by

14. Letter intercepted by the Gambia Police, enclosed in Gambia Confidential Minute Paper, No. 663/21, File No. 3/53, E.F. Small to Ebenezer MacCarthy, 21/6/1920. For E.F. Small's part in N.C.B.W.A. activities see GAMBIA Confidential Minute Papers 498/20, 633/21, 766/20. G.R.O. West Africa, 3/9/21, p. 1009: "The Congress Movement in the Gambia Colony".

an imaginary body of citizens ; he seems to find agitation irresistible".¹⁵ An account of Small's local political and trade union career, as well as his pan-African activities, would require a rather lengthy article. Small was born in Bathurst on January 29th, 1890. He was educated in Sierra Leone where he obtained a Government scholarship and was sent to the Wesleyan High School for two years. He entered the General Post Office, Freetown, on March 31st, 1910 as a probationer and was later appointed Assistant Stamp Seller. He was later transferred to the Gambia as Cost Clerk, public works department, on a daily wage. He arrived at Bathurst on January 25th, 1912, after his application for promotion had been refused. Small then worked with the French firm Maurel and Prom, from which he subsequently resigned. Then he went to the Wesleyan High School as a teacher, and was afterwards employed as Wesleyan Missionary Agent at Ballanghar in MacCarthy Island province, but he soon clashed with the local commissioner and some European residents in Ballanghar over the use of the local church station. The commissioner made a great issue out of an apparent misunderstanding, and the Rev. J.C. Lane who regarded Small as a promising young man, was compelled by the administration to dismiss Small. Small severed his connection with the Wesleyan Mission and was re-employed as a clerk by Maurel and Prom, from which he resigned again.¹⁶

A discontented man, Small became connected with the projected West African Conference after 1919, and was appointed secretary of

15. Minute to GAMBIA 3/291 by the Hon. Colonial Secretary,
18/5/37. G.R.O.

16. C.O. 554/51, Governor Armitage to the Secretary of State for
the Colonies C.O. 26537, 7/5/21.

the local committee, which sent him as its delegate to the Accra Conference in March 1920 and to London in 1920-1921 with the N.C.B.W.A. delegation.¹⁷ It must be emphasised, however, that like most of the other West African 'agitators', Small was in outlook a black Edwardian; his hobby was playing the piano: one of his compositions is entitled 'Come into the Moonlight With Me' - hardly the type of activity for a 'link-subversive'.

Between 1928 and 1934, when Comintern involvement in the colonial question was at its zenith and came to be identified with political and labour unrest in the colonies, Small was branded as one of the "link-subversives" recruited to spread Bolshevik propaganda in the colonies and foment unrest.¹⁸ Small had attended a conference in Moscow in 1930, organised by the Crestinstern (Peasants International - a branch of the Comintern); he had also attended conferences in Hamburg and Paris between 1931 and 1933, and had been in touch with Padmore who was at that time connected with the African section of the Comintern. Through Padmore Small was put in touch with the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers and the League Against Imperialism. In fact, his newspaper, The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter, carried reprints from Padmore's The Negro Worker, and a Marxian analysis of Small's moderately successful Bathurst Trade Union strike of 1929 by Padmore. Small was also a member of the local Committee of Citizens, a group which constantly lobbied the administration

17. Ibid., also GAMBIA 3/140 and 3/212. G.R.O.

18. GAMBIA 4/42, Secret M.P. No. 140, vol. 1, 29/3/34, H.R. Oke to the Rt. Hon. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 29/3/34. G.R.O.

about various complaints.¹⁹

In a confidential despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies concerning an application from the Liberian Minister at the Court of St. James for the issue of an Exequatur to Mr. Small to act as honorary Liberian Consul at Bathurst, C.R.M. Workman stated:

I am not aware whether Mr. Small has definitely joined the Communist Party, but his attendance at meetings of the European Congress of Working Peasants in Berlin, and his correspondence with the League Against Imperialism, sufficiently indicate his attitude.....²⁰

In the same despatch it was added, however, that "though his (Mr. Small's) activities on the National Congress, as organiser of the B.T.U. (Bathurst Trade Union), and even as a member of the Communist party, if he has joined it, are all objectionable, none of them are criminal."²¹

Another less known aspect of E.F. Small's career is his attempt to put into practice a part of the economic programme of the N.C.B.W.A. by founding the co-operative movement in the Gambia between 1929 and 1940.²² The present Gambia Co-operative Union is largely the result of E.F. Small's pioneering effort, a work he carried out in spite of the tremendous opposition of the

19. For Small's alleged affiliations with Comintern and with Malcolm Nurse see GAMBIA Confidential M.P. No. 1308/30, File No. 3/165. G.R.O.

20. Ibid., C.R.M. Workman, Acting Governor of the Gambia, to Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 2/6/1930.

21. Ibid., minute to, 22/5/1930.

22. Valuable information about the origins and growth of the Gambia co-operative movement can be found in:- GAMBIA 4/42: "Activities of E.F. Small, 1918-1931" and File No. RCS/EDU/12 (Gambia Co-operative Department) especially the papers prepared by students on co-operative course, 1961: "A Historical Research: Co-operation in the Gambia". The irony of the career of this 'agitator' is that his services were finally recognised in 1953 when he was awarded the then much coveted O.B.E.

administration. The history of this movement cannot be dealt with here, because of lack of space, but its significance must not be overlooked in any discussion of the economic aspects of nationalism in West Africa.

Between 1920 and 1932 Small found himself in trouble with both the Gambia and Senegal administrations. The Governor of the Gambia disliked this 'agitator' so intensely, that one cannot resist quoting him in full:

Having obtained a Government scholarship, he, like too many of his kind, became imbued with an unduly inflated sense of his own importance. He now poses as the "Gambian Delegate" to the "West African National Congress" and edits a paper - "The Gambia Outlook" that is printed in, and circulated from Dakar. He is probably subsidised in this venture by the "West African National Congress".... The Chiefs and Natives of the protectorate equally repudiated any connection with "the West African National Congress", so that Mr. Small's following appears to consist of a few discontented Government Clerks, Natives of Sierra Leone, who have been getting into touch with Marcus Garvey's emissaries, who recently made their appearance at Dakar, but were deported by the French Authorities". Governor Armitage expressed the desire to be instructed not to pay serious attention to "this discredited persons effusions, which, if encouraged, will become an intolerable burden both to the Colonial Office and to me, and will stimulate other irresponsible natives to indulge in similar vapid outpourings."²³

In June 1931 Small was expelled from the Senegal while on the business of the Gambia Farmers' Co-operative Marketing Association, on the suspicion that he was an agitator and an anti-Diagnist. He and his assistant, Mr. Baburarr Secca were told that they were "anti-Diagnist agents plotting to overthrow Monsieur Diagne, the Senegalese Deputy, at the coming election". Small argued that it

23. GAMBIA 4/42, Secret M.P. No.140, vol. I, 29/3/34; "Small, E.F. Particulars of as a 'link Subversive'", C.H. Armitage to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4/11/1922. G.R.O.

was not the business of the colonial administration to 'interfere' with elections, adding: "On our part, if anything, we are naturally pro-Diagnost from a broad racial point of view, which of course is nothing to do with local politics". 'The Outlook and Reporter', on the other hand is internationally pro-Diagnost in policy, and strongly pro-French, being a staunch advocate of Anglo-French co-operation across the Senegambian border..... I do not know if M. Diagne's policy as Deputy for Senegal, or the official policy of the French Government of West Africa, is opposed, as Mr. Diagne's opponents allege, to foreign trade; the truth or otherwise remains to be seen"²⁴

To come back to the Gambia committee of the N.C.B.W.A. In 1920 this committee was constituted as follows:- the Hon. S.J. Forster, chairman of the General Committee; S.J. Auber, treasurer; E.F. Small, secretary; C.J. Goddard, E. Thomas, Dr. T. Bishop,²⁵ J.R. Clarke, T.B. Jones, E. de Kola Richards, B. O'Brien Coker, M.S.J. Richards, J.J. Oldfield, Omar Gaye Cham, Ousman N'jai, B.J. George, J.M. Roberts, Cyril Richards, Cecil Richards, J. Bass, J.S. Thomas.²⁶ The Gambia delegation to the March 1920 Accra

24. E.F. Small quoted in Reginald Bridgeman, Secretary of the League Against Imperialism and For National Independence (British Section), 28/1/1932, to Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State for the Colonies, GAMBIA 3/212. Conf. M.P. No. 1553, 30/3/32: "Small, E.F. - Expulsion from French Senegal". G.R.O.

25. The Hon. Dr. Thomas Bishop was born in Freetown in 1868; educated at the Wesleyan High School and at Birmingham, Durham and Edinburgh universities; he set up medical practice in Bathurst in 1904 after serving in Freetown; appointed member of the Bathurst Legislative Council in 1916: Allister Macmillan: The Red Book of West Africa (London, 1920), p. 294.

26. E.F. Small to the Colonial Secretary, 11/6/1920 GAMBIA 3/62, Colonial Secretary's Office, File No. 766. G.R.O.

Conference was selected at a mass meeting (the usual procedure of all the N.C.B.W.A. committees) called by the working committee of the Gambia section of the N.C.B.W.A., of which the Hon. S.J. Forster was the chairman. Small described the N.C.B.W.A. as "an intercolonial council and an entirely democratic institution of Africans of British West Africa, though by no means anti-government or anti-racial in its nature and objects".²⁷ The most active members of the local committee were John A. Mahoney, a local merchant and a clerk with Maurel and Prom; M.S. Oldfield, half-brother of E.F. Small and a clerk with Vezia and Co. Ltd.; J.J. Oldfield a former assistant clerk of the Legislative Council and a member of the Anglican church body; Jatta Joof, a Mohammedan member of the Legislative Council and a carpenter by trade; Benjamin J. George, a Gambian trader of Sierra Leone extraction; M.S.J. Richards, a trader; I.J. Roberts, a solicitor of Sierra Leone extraction and President of the local committee.²⁸

What is clear from the membership list of the local committee is that the leadership was mainly in the hand of the propertied and conservative 'middle class' Creoles who were usually of Sierra Leone extraction; some of these were retired civil servants, mercantile clerks, traders, lawyers or local contractors and artisans. Like their counterparts in Sierra Leone, they held 'the British Constitution' in high esteem, and prided themselves in the fact that the Gambia was an 'ancient and loyal Colony', and were very much attached to property and legality. When the session of

27. Ibid., E.F. Small to the Colonial Secretary, 7/6/1920.

28. Ibid., minute to, 7/6/1920.

the Gambia to France was being considered by the Colonial Office between 1866 and 1876, the Bathurst community, led by Creoles like Henry Finden, Samuel John Forster and J.D. Richards pleaded that they were opposed to the transfer

Because they are averse to French rule, because as loyal subjects of the Queen, they are attached to British institutions, because they love political and religious liberty, and because by their industry they have acquired property in these settlements which the projected transfer will materially affect.....²⁹

As in most parts along the West coast, the Western educated and propertied Creoles generally assumed the leadership of protest and political movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.³⁰ The Muslims involved in the politics of the local committee were few in relation to the population of the Muslim community, and in most cases participants were either leaders of Muslim opinion who had their own political and social ambitions like the Hon. Sheikh Omar Fye, who was also a trader, or were Muslims who had social or business contacts with their Creole counterparts, or had objections to economic sharp practices by foreign firms like the blacklisting of African merchants who had fallen into debt.

29. Quoted in J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia (C.U.P., 1940), pp. 440-441.

30. P. Garigue: An Anthropological Interpretation of Changing Political Leadership in West Africa. London University Ph.D. thesis, 1953, pp. 183-186, 204-206, 225-226, 312-314.
 A. Porter: Creoledom (O.U.P., 1963), pp. 119-128.
 C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone (O.U.P., 1962), passim.
 Jean Herskovits Kopytoff: A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890 (University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), Chs. 9-10. For a critical review of this book see The Journal of African History, vol. VII, 1966, No.3, pp. 522-524 by A.E. Afigbo.
 J.S. Coleman: Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkely, 1958), passim.

POLITICS AND PRESSURE-GROUP ACTIVITY OF THE GAMBIA SECTION OF THE
N.C.B.W.A.

The Bathurst section of the N.C.B.W.A., contrary to David Kimble who asserts that there was "hardly any scope for politics at all in the Gambia",³¹ was not the most inactive of the Congress branches in West Africa. Presumably, much would depend on what we mean by 'politics', colonial or otherwise. In the absence of a definition, we shall go on to describe what happened in the Gambia committee of the N.C.B.W.A. Although interest in the N.C.B.W.A. was not sustained, the Gambia congress committee was more active in its early years (1920-1925) than the Lagos branch, which was not only divided internally, but was opposed by an influential section of the Lagos social elite. Perhaps the most interesting aspects of the Gambia Congress Committee were its attempts to win the support of the conservative Mohammedan community in order to 'prove' its representative character, and the interest the colonial administration showed in the Congress' activities - an interest out of proportion to the strength and popularity of the local movement.

In Bathurst, colonial and municipal politics revolved around the Mohammedan community which had its internal divisions, the Chamber of Commerce which was always in close touch with the administration, and the local congress movement which was smaller in numbers but more articulate in its demand for a limited form of elective representation. The paradox was that while it was Government strategy to neutralise or isolate the Mohammedan community

31. D. Kimble, op.cit., p. 399.

from the Congress,³² the Almami of Bathurst and Sheikh Omar Fye, a leading member of the Mohammedan community, were favourably disposed towards the Congress. When asked why he had endorsed the resolutions passed by a meeting of the Gambia Congress committee on April 18, 1925,³³ the Almami replied that he had endorsed the resolutions as he was particularly opposed to the 'blacklisting' of local merchants by foreign firms, and that all religious leaders had endorsed the resolutions. He also added:

I am quite ready to participate in any movement from the inhabitants of Bathurst for the welfare of my country on things that I am satisfied are worth writing, but not imposed by any one.³⁴

Earlier in 1922, when the congress movement was at its zenith, the government had considered the attempts by the Congress committee to enlist the support of the Almami of Bathurst a 'serious political question', as 'the position of the Almami in Bathurst is..... analogous to that of a Roman Catholic priest in Ireland, and though primarily religious, his political influence depends on his personality. The argument that his investiture with a Chiefs Badge makes him the head of the Mohammedan community here for all purposes is ingenious, and is no doubt the chief reason why the Congress people want him on their platform. The propaganda of the Congress has altered the situation since H.E. wrote in para. 6 of (41) in Conf. 585 that the Mohammedans had agreed that they would have nothing further to do with the Congress.

32. B.A. Finn, minute to confidential 776/20, 4/7/21. Gambia Records Office.

33. The Colonial Secretary to the Almami, GAMBIA 160/1925, File No. 2/671, 2/5/1925. Gambia Records Office.

34. Ibid., the Almami of Bathurst to The Colonial Secretary, 4/5/1925. Gambia Records Office.

It is significant that among the supporters of the Congress Sheiku Fye is now numbered. He was said to have been unacceptable to the Bathurst Moslems formerly because he declined to join the Congress to which the late Almami subscribed £10.....³⁵

The Government, however, had a useful ally in the person of Alhadji Ousman Jeng, a member of the Legislative Council and a former Secretary of the Bathurst Congress Committee. On October 19th, 1922, Ousman Jeng, in correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, referred to "the existence of a party amongst the younger members of the muslim community, who are victims of the Congress propaganda". The Congress militants, he said, had tried very hard to persuade the Almami to attend their meetings to symbolise the active support of the Mohammedan community, but he (Ousman Jeng) had been able, "with the Almami's advisory committee's assistance, to keep away my people as also the Almami from identifying themselves with the movement I am engaged in very active propaganda to keep my people out" Jeng also described Congress activity as 'poisonous propaganda' which might very well 'raise the question of intercommunication with the Government, and political representation'. He advised the Colonial Secretary: 'To settle this, and put the question of representation on a safe hand (sic), I will ask you, Sir, to pass every communication intended for the Almami and the muslim community through me, and to ask the Almami to make me the medium of whatever communication he wishes to make to His Excellency and the Government. This will make him above the ramifications (sic)

35. Minute to Confidential 776/20, File No. 3/62 by C.R.M.
Workman, 19/11/22. G.R.O.

of the Congress propaganda and will eventually save (sic) my people from its poison.'³⁶ The secretary of the Almami's advisory council had also been in correspondence with Alhadji Ousman Jeng, informing him that 'The National Congress is once again on the move, and a good deal of incitement is going on through the agency of our most ignorant co-religionists, who interviewed the Almami with the intention of forcibly making him a supporter of the Chairman (i.e. of the Congress branch)..... The delegation that waited upon the Almami were Saloum N'Jie, Ousman N'Jie, Shaiku Fye and Mustapha Jallow. The Almami was asked to attend as representative of the Community, whose identification with the Congress was to be the pledge of Muslim support.' He also observed that the Almami could either support the Congress, in which case he would have to resign the Almamiship, or eschew the Congress and all its works. Jeng, the letter added, was the 'trustee of the Political interests of the Community' (i.e. the Mohammedan community) and should 'take the requisite action for safeguarding the true interests of the Community, in concert with the government,' and should warn the Mohammedan community against involvement in the congress movement.³⁷

The rivalry between Alhadji Ousman Jeng and the Hon. Sheikh Fye was not simply a question of the former posing as the

36. Alhadji the Hon. Ousman Jeng to the Hon. Colonial Secretary, 423/20, File No. 3/62, 19/10/1922. G.R.O.

37. Ibid., Omar B. Jallow to the Hon. Ousman Jeng, 18/10/1922. Omar B. Jallow to the Colonial Secretary, C.R.M. Workman, 18/10/1922. Omar B. Jallow to C.R.M. Workman, GAMBIA 221/1922, File No. 2/507, 6/3/1922.

recognised spokesman of the Mohammedan community against a fellow Mohammedan who had joined the ranks of the congress 'agitators'. It was essentially the personalisation of the cleavage in the Mohammedan community over the question of elective representation.³⁸ As in Lagos during the 1920's, the social and political interests of the various influential groups in the Colony generally determined their attitude to the political demands of the Congress movement. In Bathurst, the majority of the Mohammedans followed the conservative 'no change' line of Alhadji Ousman Jeng, but the 'influential minority'³⁹ among them desired a modest form of elective representation. The Bathurst Chamber of Commerce, which embraced 'practically all the trading interests', had little to worry about, franchise or no franchise. As for the protectorate peoples, it was the government's view that they exhibited 'no desire to become involved in the affairs of the colony', and were 'happy and content to accept the generally benevolent rule of their chiefs and headmen under the watchful eye of the commissioner'.⁴⁰ The third group was the local committee of the N.C.B.W.A., which advocated a limited franchise and claimed to be the barometer of 'public opinion'. The very nature of its membership, however, disqualified it from the beginning from making

38. "Among the muslim community there is a distinct difficulty in the way of elective representation since as they themselves admit, 'we are divided into castes and classes', and the election of any one man to represent their interests would lead to further dissensions". GAMBIA 3/433, Confidential M.P. No. S. 2831, 17/12/1942: "Historical Notes on Executive and Legislative Councils". G.R.O.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

such a claim. Although it was numerically inferior, its agitation for elective representation was not entirely ignored.⁴¹ Its advocacy of a limited form of elective representation was thought to be a corrective to the system under the old constitution whereby the Governor could nominate unofficial African members of the Legislative Council after formal consultation with the Urban District Council, or Bathurst Advisory Council as it was called in the 1920's. It was never laid down whether the Governor was compelled to accept the view of the Council, although the disadvantages of rejecting its views were obvious, as the Council might quite possibly suggest an individual whom the Governor considered unsuitable as his nominee.⁴²

Although limited forms of elective representation were introduced in Nigeria (1923), Sierra Leone (1924) and the Gold Coast (1925), similar reforms were not introduced in the Gambia. The intense agitation mounted by the local congress committee in 1922-1925 led to no changes. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, J.H. Thomas, reiterated Lord Milner's earlier policy of 1921 when he stated in a despatch to the Governor in 1924, ".... while I sympathise with their desire for elective institutions, I do not consider that education and political thought in the colony, and still less in the protectorate (which could not well be separated from the colony in any constitutional arrangement

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

which might be made) have yet reached a level which could render elective institutions valuable".⁴³ It was not until 12th September, 1947, twenty-seven years after the demand for elective representation, that the Legislative Council was reconstituted, with provision for one elected member to represent the colony and Kombo St. Mary.⁴⁴

The economic slump of 1921 created a temporary lull in the activities of the local congress movement, as the merchants, traders and artisans who provided the leadership of the movement were hard hit; paradoxically, the slump had the effect of increasing the bitterness of the African middleman who complained that he was being 'squeeze in'.⁴⁵ Agitation was continued in 1922-24, with the usual petitions, protestations of loyalty and 'mass meetings' at which funds were collected. In 1923 the local congressmen renewed their demand for limited elective representation only to be told that apart from the fact that their views were unrepresentative of colony opinion, they were generally people of Sierra Leone origin.⁴⁶ The Colonial Secretary also told

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Herbert Macaulay Papers (Ibadan University Library), V, 35, pp. 14-15, Henry M. Jones to Herbert Macaulay, 11/8/31; GAMBIA No. 249, C.H. Armitage to the Colonial Secretary, 31/12/26; GAMBIA Confidential M.P. No. 3/46: "Conference of Africans of British West Africa", especially the "Report on the Bathurst Branch by Commissioner of Police, Captain C. Greig", Confidential No. 28, 26/3/26; The Gold Coast Leader, 6/2/26; Finden Dailey: 'The trade system of the Gambia is ruining the African middleman'. West African Review, Oct., 1936, pp. 46-47.

46. GAMBIA 2/575, 581/1923: "Legislative Council: Request for elective representation", Minute to 2/575 by C.R.M. Workman, 11/8/23, para. 2. G.R.O.

them that with three unofficial members on the Council - the Hon. S.J. Forster representing the 'natives' of the Colony and Protectorate, the Hon. Ousman Jeng representing the Mohammedan community, and the Hon. W. Yare representing mercantile interests - 'adequate provision has been made', and that the flood of petitions and memorials from the gentlemen of the congress committee was 'becoming a nuisance'.⁴⁷ Yet another petition in early 1924, praying His Excellency 'to review the facts of the Case and in keeping with the progressive changes in other British West African Colonies',⁴⁸ was rejected, with Workman replying laconically that His Excellency had 'nothing to add' to his previous correspondence with them on the subject.⁴⁹ When West Africa took up the case of the local committee, Armitage charged its editor Cartwright with ignorance of local conditions, noting that Mr. J.A. Mahoney, secretary to the Gambia Branch and his lieutenants were so busy during the trade season that they had little time to indulge in political agitation, but that from June to the end of November 'they appear to find time hang heavy on their hands and employ it in bombarding the Secretariat with letters and in holding what they are pleased to term "Mass (sic) Meetings", at which they attempt

47. Ibid., minute by C.R.M. Workman, 27/3/24.

48. Ibid., "Petition of the Gambia Branch of NCBWA to Rt. Hon. Secretary of State for the Colonies", 6/5/24.

49. GAMBIA 581/1923, File No. 2/575, Workman to the Secretary, Gambia Section, N.C.B.W.A., 28/3/24. Ibid., B.A. Finn, Acting Colonial Secretary to Secretary Gambia Section of N.C.B.W.A., 30/7/24; J.H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Captain G.H. Armitage, 18/6/24, West Africa: "The Gambia and Electoral Representation", p. 866, 23/8/24 and pp.1252-1253: "The Gambia Government and Municipal Politics", 8/11/24.

to collect contributions to the Gambia Branch. So far as I can ascertain, no accounts of such contributions have been kept, nor has any sort of benefit accrued to the contributors, most of whom have given up throwing good money after bad I am justified in taking steps to insure that the Gambia Section of the National Congress of British West Africa may not come to be regarded as the medium of communication between the Governor of this Colony and the inhabitants of Bathurst and the Protectorate.'⁵⁰

To the charges made by the administration, J.A. Mahoney, secretary of the local committee replied that the Bathurst committee of the Congress felt that its petition for elective representation 'was obviously not one of numbers, but of principle', and that since Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Gold Coast were 'constitutionally from point of Government one and the same as the Gambia, and seeking the same constitutional and other Reforms in common', it was 'only natural and reasonable' that the reforms granted to those territories should be extended to the Gambia, 'especially as no one of them could be said to be less loyal than another; and more so as such Reforms are calculated to foster greater confidence between the governing and the governed.....'⁵¹ He observed that the suggestion that the Hon. S.J. Forster was qualified to represent the African community in the Legislative Council was 'diverting and misleading', adding that the Hon. S.J. Forster, 'in conjunction with his people, does not quite regard his nominated appointment as affording effective representation,

50. West Africa, 8/12/24, pp. 1226, 1252-53.

51. J.A. Mahoney to the Colonial Secretary, GAMBIA 581/1923, File No. 2/575, 26/3/24. G.R.O.

and therefore cannot but seek the election by the people to a seat on the Legislative Council. Besides, as it is the same small proportion of the population that the Honourable S.J. Forster has been nominated to represent, it seems inconsistent to withhold Elective representation on numerical grounds.⁵² As for the election of the Hon. Alhadji Ousman Jeng to represent the Mohammedan community, Mahoney was of the opinion that his selection 'did not carry the essentials of electioneering', and even if it did, 'it is further submitted that it would be un-British and unfair to allow of one Section electing its own representative while another (and indisputably a more competent) should be compelled to content itself with a Government nominee to guard its interests'. Finally, Mahoney asserted that the fact that prominent congress members like I.J. Roberts, S.J. Auber, B. O'Brien Coker, Sultan Davies and E.N. Jones were Sierra Leoneans was 'very extraneous' to any argument about their right to make political demands or participate in local 'politics'. In fact, he said, 'the result of the recent Election in Nigeria will serve to correct such an erroneous and pernicious idea'.⁵³ B.J. George, also of Sierra Leone extraction and secretary of the Bathurst congress branch in 1923, also described the government's disapproval of Sierra Leoneans

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., the elections referred to were those of 1923 when the Nigerian National Democratic Party of Herbert Macaulay, among whose candidates was Dr. C.C. Adeniyi-Jones who was of Sierra Leone extraction, won all the seats in Lagos. T.N. Tamuno: Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923-1947 (Heineman, 1966), pp. 79-82.

participating in Bathurst politics as an argument 'shrouded in an enigma', and asserted that it was one of the aims of the Congress 'to foster and establish the spirit of Unity and Co-operation among the peoples of the four British West African Colonies wherever their lot may be cast; and any policy or measure which tends to divide and rule is viewed with much alarm and grave concern'.⁵⁴

The third Session of the N.C.B.W.A. was held in Bathurst in December 1925 - January 1926 after some organizational difficulties. Nigeria sent no delegates. But even by 1926 the local congress movement, partly because of persistent rejection of its petitions and partly because of a prospering economy, had begun to lose its earlier elan. At that Session, apart from the resolutions which criticised the inadequacies of the 1925 Gold Coast constitution and demanded the establishment of a West African University, the following resolutions were also passed:

1. That the Congress, having taken into careful consideration the several Constitutions of British West Africa, records the view that that Constitution is best, that makes provision for the effective and efficient expression of public opinion.

4. That in the opinion of the Congress, the time has arrived for the elective system of representation to be fully applied to the Colony of the Gambia

5. That the Congress is of the opinion that until the standard of effective representation be reached in the several British West African Colonies, it is highly desirable that the official majority be not made use of in cases where the opinion of the unofficial side of the Legislative Council is distinctly against a given measure or course of action

⁵⁴. B.J. George, Secretary Gambia Section to B.P.E. Bulstrode, Officer-in-Charge, Secretariat, 30/8/1923. GAMBIA 581/23, 2/575. G.R.O.

6. That the Congress draws attention to its Resolution under this head at its second Session, namely:

"That the Congress, having seriously considered the question of British West African Federation with a Governor-General, is of the opinion that the matter should be kept in view, and in due course representations made to His Majesty's Government to take it into deep and sympathetic consideration", and records the view that the time has now arrived for the various sections of the Congress to consider the question seriously with a view to representation.⁵⁵

Apart from reiterating the demand for a West African University, the 1926 Bathurst Session also advocated the setting up of 'National Schools' in West Africa, alongside those of missionary schools.⁵⁶ These schools were 'to have as one of their main objects the establishment of Institutions on the Tuskegee principle'⁵⁷ They also advocated compulsory education in all towns in British West Africa; industrial and agricultural training 'combined with sound elementary education' was specially recommended for the Gambia Protectorate, and a Secondary Boarding School for Bathurst, 'so as to fit the youths to cope, in due course, with modern conditions'.⁵⁸ The establishment of an Education Department with a Director and an Inspector of Schools was also recommended for the Gambia. More importantly, the

55. Africana Pamphlets, Ibadan University Library, S.R. Wood to Editor of The Lagos Daily News, 6/10/31, No. 186/1931/F11: Resolutions of the Third Session of Congress Held at Bathurst, Gambia, December 1925 to January 1926 And of the Fourth Session Held at Lagos, Nigeria, January 1930. Drawn up in parallel form, with footnotes and appendices containing previous resolutions therein referred to. General Secretary's Office, Axim, Gold Coast, West Africa.

56. Resolutions 3-4 of the Lagos Session, 1930.

57. Ibid.; GAMBIA, M.P. 160/1925: "Resume of the Proceedings of the Third Session of the NC of BWA, held at Bathurst, River Gambia, from December 24th, 1925 to January 10th, 1926". G.R.O.

58. Resolution 8, Bathurst Session, 1925-1926.

Bathurst Session contended that 'the system of Education is best for the African, as for any other nationality, which aims at the highest efficiency while preserving the national traits of the African not repugnant to good conscience'.⁵⁹

Economic questions were also discussed; the aim of the Congress was to secure 'commercial and economic independence' for West Africa, which meant the creation of more elbow room for the African middleman. As usual, the land question was raised. the proposed introduction of the plantation system roundly condemned, as well as the blacklisting of African merchants and commercial clerks by the Chambers of Commerce. Agricultural banks and co-operative marketing of produce were also recommended to help the producer to command reasonably high prices, and as a 'means of countering combinations which control the market'.⁶⁰ The branches of the Congress were exhorted to carry out 'more extensive propaganda work..... to promote the commercial and economic independence of the people'. The 'imperative necessity and urgency' of a West African Appellate Court was also stressed, and the appointment of Africans to higher posts in the judiciary recommended. On self-determination, the Bathurst Session no doubt fearing a possible British exchange of the Gambia for French territory, resolved:

That it (the Congress) respectfully desires an assurance from His Majesty's Government that under no circumstances whatever will it be a consenting party to the integrity of any of the four British West African Colonies being disturbed....., regrets that no pronouncement has yet been made and begs that the matter may receive the attention of

59. Ibid., Resolution 2.

60. Ibid.

His Majesty's Government and with particular reference to the Colony of the Gambia.

The Bathurst Session, like the 1923 Freetown Session, was almost turned into a public holiday and a social occasion. It began with an impressive church service in which the social elite of Bathurst praised the Lord

For the Christian parentage,
And sweet days of tutelage.

Gifted Creole musicians like J.O.E. Taylor composed pan-African hymns like

A people's cause do not deny,
Give wisdom to our Congress, Lord.
Support us in the fight.
Bid laws unjust forever cease,
Break slavery's chains, our souls release.....

From iron rule, from greed and pride,
Save Afric's soil, our Fatherland,
Defend the Negroe's plight:
Secure his liberty and right.....

Dr. A.O. Olaribige, a Nigerian doctor who had participated in the 1919 and 1921 Pan-African Congresses in Europe, and was now practising in Bathurst, delivered the sermon, while a special prayer for the Congress movement prayed for 'our Great Cause', and asked the Almighty to forgive' our backwardness and selfish dispositions, our spirit of dis-union and indifference to the welfare of others.....' And, of course, they prayed for all 'enlightened and Christian Governments', 'particularly that of the British Empire under His Gracious Majesty, George V, our King and Governor (for whose christian and noble life, we desire to bless Thee).....', and asked God to give his servants the Governors 'a

keen sense of their great responsibility to direct the affairs of the world in Righteousness and Equity to all alike'. Nor were they indifferent to economics, for they asked the Almighty to 'Remove the world-wide depression in Trade and bid stagnation and all unrest cease'. As for the Congress movement itself, they prayed Him to 'Guide and defend this institution from the effects of misrepresentation and the selfish purposes of men', and to 'make it a blessing to the world in general and an effective instrument for the Redemption and uplift of Africa'.⁶¹

The proceedings of the Session read almost like a seminar; there were visits to interesting projects, and there was a good deal of entertainment. One interesting feature was the participation of ladies. There was, in fact, a Women's Auxiliary Committee of the Gambia Section of the Congress, whose secretary was Mrs. Hannah Forster. Other lady delegates were Mrs. C.N. Roberts, president of the Women's Auxiliary, Mrs. H.N. Davies, vice-president, Mrs. H.A. Mahoney, Mrs. Regina Smart and Mrs. B. Saunders. "They attended regularly and intelligently took part in the various debates and some of them made substantial contributions and offered valuable suggestions", and of course they spoke about 'Women in West Africa', a topic introduced by Mrs. Hannah Forster.⁶²

Like its contemporary the Pan-African movement of W.E.B. Du Bois, the National Congress movement was weak in

61. The National Congress of British West Africa: Hymns and Order of Services For the Third Session of Congress in Saint Mary's School Room, Sunday, December 13th, 1925.

62. GAMBIA M.P. 160/1925: "Resume of the Proceedings of the Third Session of the NC of BWA, held at Bathurst, River Gambia, from December 24th, 1925-January 10th, 1926."

organisation and co-ordination; it had become a biennial seminar of the West African nationalist intelligentsia after 1923, with the various local committees using their organisations to lobby their respective governments for specific reforms. The 1921 slump had dampened its enthusiasm, while the 1923 Cliffordian reforms, followed by similar reforms in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, largely removed the wind out of its sails. But as long as Casely Hayford was its President, the pan-West African idea lived on, especially in the Gold Coast and in Sierra Leone. In the Gambia, however, disappointment with the failure to achieve even a limited form of elective representation led to conservatism and then apathy. As the report of the Commissioner of Police stated, from 1924 onwards 'the views expressed by members of the Gambia Branch of the West African National Congress and the tone of their meetings has been much more moderate'.⁶³ The report continued:

..... they appear to better realise today, that reforms with regard to representation must come more gradually than they advocated some years ago. I am glad to say that there is now an entire absence of 'Africa for Africans only and as early as possible', which was at one time the suggested undercurrent of the speeches of the younger and more extreme members.⁶⁴

Captain Greig thought that the congress had failed to appeal to the majority of Mohammedans in Bathurst and to the Protectorate as a whole. He also observed that it had lost its elan because of 'A return to more normal conditions of life after the boom years of trade, the fictitious prosperity of which misled many into the

63. GAMBIA Confidential M.P. No. 3/46, Colonial Secretary's Office: "Conference of Africans of British West Africa. Report on the Bathurst Section by Commissioner of Police, Captain C. Greig". Confidential No. 28, 26/3/26. G.R.O.

64. Ibid.

belief that continued prosperity was easy of achievement and that it would continue to give them the leisure and means that originally made them abnormally ambitious'.⁶⁵ Another factor, according to Greig, was that 'the Extremists found that their methods lost them the support of the more influential and responsible Africans' like J.T. Roberts and Dr. Thomas Bishop.⁶⁶

After 1924, the meetings of the local congress branch became 'less influentially and numerically attended'. Their 'mass' meetings were no more than gatherings of thirty to forty people in a school room. The Mohammedans became less interested the more they were called upon to contribute to Congress funds.⁶⁷ The years of idealism and agitation (1920-24) had given place to a more conservative and constitutionally-minded leadership; the 1921 slump had already severely affected the small merchant class which was most influential in the movement, while the failure of the 1920-21 London Congress Delegation to obtain some measure of elective representation from the Colonial Office and, paradoxically enough, the Cliffordian reforms of 1923, further disillusioned an

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.; also Appendix A, Confidential No.11, 3/46, The Commissioner of Police to the Hon. Colonial Secretary, 19/5/24: "Report on Congress Meeting held on 17/5/1924". G.R.O.

67. Ibid., para 6; paras. 8-9 of Appendix B, Confidential No.17, 12/11/25, 3/46; ibid., No.84, the Hon. Ousman Jeng to the Hon. the Acting Colonial Secretary, 2/7/24. Ibid. No. 87, 9/7/24, B.A. Finn to Ousman Jeng; also the Hon. Ousman Jeng to the Colonial Secretary, 3/46, No.58, 30/10/22 in which after reporting that he had already communicated the Government's attitude to the Congress to the Almami of Bathurst, Jeng assured the Colonial Secretary that 'it will take a very long time to awaken real interest in this movement, amongst the rank and file of the Muslims'.

already poorly organised pan-West African nationalist movement. In the Gambia, the 'gradual' evolution of elective institutions was so gradual that it was only achieved in 1947.

Even after the demise of the Congress movement in the early 1930's, Gambian newspapers like The Gambia Echo and E.F. Small's The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter continued agitating for 'the Franchise'; with this also went their policy of 'trust the British', but from the beginning all they had asked for was a limited measure of elective representation. As one newspaper put it:

No one has ever sought to defeat the official majority on the Legislative Council. It is well that this fact be clearly understood by advocates of the franchise. It is well that they should suffer no disillusionment hereafter; and they should be quite certain about it, that a limited franchise will only have a moral influence on the representation of the people, but would make no real difference to the official strength of the Legislature Representative Government for the Gambia is out of the question for the present. A fair measure of direct representation of the people is all we mean by the demand for the franchise.⁶⁸

Another number of the same paper claimed that the principle of elective representation had been accepted by a resolution of the 1865 House of Commons Select Committee ('this historic Resolution') and that the N.C.B.W.A. had been influenced by that resolution.⁶⁹ M.S.J. Richards, vice-president of the local congress branch gave a more realistic summary of constitutional progress in the colony when he stated:

..... it would appear that the Government has been keeping the wheels of progress backward and contenting

68. The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter, 18/1/1936, p. 2.

69. Ibid., 1/2/1936, p. 6.

itself with remaining in status quo for over a hundred years with the same old constitution.⁷⁰

But if the realists accepted the status quo, the Pan-African idealists still clung to their vision of a united West Africa.

J.W. Kuye, who seems never to have tired of theorising about the right of the people to self-determination, and was a great admirer of Edward Blyden, Sir Samuel Lewis and W.E.B. Du Bois, asserted in 1926:

This sentiment of African race and African nationality has become more important in this century than ever before; it is interesting to note its wonderful development among West Africans, for to-day, it is the classic of society. Not only have the teachings of thinkers set forth the importance of the theory, but the deeds of public men and patriots have more or less demonstrated the practicability of it. The efforts of men like Booker T. Washington and Burghardt Du Bois of America, of Blaise Diagne of the Senegal of the Honourable Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast have proved the indestructible vitality and tenacity of race Although we have become British by alliance, yet not un-African in aspiration. We have secured the great benefits of the Pax Britannica, we want also to preserve our race individuality

In visions of the future of West Africa, I behold her people everywhere inspired with the consciousness of one common brotherhood from the hinterland of mighty Nigeria, through the diamondiferous (sic) districts of wealthy Gold Coast, past the salubrious hills of progressive Sierra Leone, on to the peaceful banks of secluded Gambia; from the humble hut in the hinterland of 'primeval innocence and glory' to the stately edifice of twentieth century civilisation. I see too chiefs and people, Christians and Mohammedans and pagans, the intellectual celebrities and the unsophisticated artisans, the leaders of African thought and the confiding mass of the country all daring and doing something for the progress of the race.⁷¹

Such is the tenacity of ideology, even in the face of harsh colonial realities.⁷²

70. Ibid., 28/11/1936, p. 4.

71. Ibid., 21/11/1936, p. 7, reproduction of speech by J.W. Kuye at Third Session of the N.C.B.W.S., Bathurst, 1925-1926.

72. J.D.B. Miller: The Nature of Politics (Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 162-163.

II

THE SIERRA LEONE SECTION OF THE N.C.B.W.A:

Apart from the Gold Coast, the most enthusiastic support for the N.C.B.W.A. was given by the Freetown elite which experienced a relatively smaller degree of disagreement on the objects and methods of the movement than the Gold Coast and Lagos branches. In fact, it was in Freetown that concrete organisational proposals were first made towards the realisation of the N.C.B.W.A. Early in 1917, Dr. Akiwande Savage and Casely Hayford had already been in touch with the Hon. J.H. Thomas and Claudius May (editor of The Sierra Leone Weekly News) about the feasibility of a West African Conference and the extent of local support for the idea in Freetown. In early 1918 J.H. Thomas and Claudius May sent a circular inviting members of the Freetown community to attend a public meeting at the Wilberforce Memorial Hall on April 29th, 'to discuss the proposal of a West African Conference'. They added:

This proposal has found favour on the Gold Coast and in Nigeria, where it is felt that a Conference of representative men would have the effect of bringing the peoples in these Colonies into closer union, of stimulating interest in matters concerning their common welfare, and of giving increased weight to public opinion in West Africa. Leading men on the Gold Coast and in Nigeria have communicated with the undersigned (i.e. Claudius May and J.H. Thomas) for the purpose of ascertaining whether the people of Sierra Leone will co-operate in this scheme. Shall we stand aloof or shall we join the movement? ...⁷³

Earlier in January 1918, E.S. Beoku Betts⁷⁴ had written to the

73. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 27/4/1918, pp. 8-9; the earliest editorial on the Conference project appeared in S.L.W.N., 13/3/15, pp. 8-9.

74. E.S. Beoku Betts was born in Freetown in 1895; educated at the Leopold Educational Institute and Fourah Bay College. In 1914
[Contd.]

editor of the Gold Coast Leader, describing the projected West African Conference as 'a necessity which nothing can disguise'. Betts thought that the British West African Colonies were 'under guardianship of a race that cares little for sentiment. Action is what they respect, by action they have proceeded all their days.'⁷⁵ The West African press, he said, should have a common policy on representative government, as it was 'the mouthpiece of the people' and did not serve the interests of any one party.⁷⁶

Already organisational proposals were being suggested in the Freetown newspapers; one correspondent suggested that although there were some problems peculiar to the various colonies, in general (1) local newspapers should call for opinions on the subject of the projected Conference for a period of six weeks. (2) a 'committee of learned, thoughtful, and experienced gentlemen' should then be formed to consider these suggestions, the same procedure being adopted in the other colonies, each colony preparing a rough programme which would then be co-ordinated by a Gold Coast

74. Contd.] he went to England to study law and was called to the Bar (Middle Temple) in 1917; gained the B.C.L. and M.A. degrees at Durham (1915), and the LL.B. (London) in 1917. He was the younger son of C.W. Betts, a general hardware and wholesale merchant of Kissy Street. His father specialised in a wide range of hardware supplies, importing from Europe and America and owned five stores in Freetown. He was 'one of the most noteworthy and successful of the local native traders'. Allister Macmillan: The Red Book of West Africa (London, 1920), pp. 264, 271. Betts founded and edited the fiery Aurora in 1919 and championed the N.C.B.W.A.; he was also one of the Sierra Leone delegates to the 1920 Accra Conference; he later became a magistrate after participating in Freetown politics with H.C. Bankole-Bright, the Hon. J.H. Thomas and the Hon. Shorunkeh Sawyer.

75. The Gold Coast Leader, 19/1/1918, p. 7.

76. Ibid.; also the issues for Feb. 9-23, 1918, p. 4 and 2/2/1918, pp. 3-4.

general committee. (3) editors of local newspapers should serve on the local congress committees, one of them being selected as a delegate to the Accra Conference. (4) the cost of propaganda and the expenses of delegates should be met by public subscriptions collected by the local committees.⁷⁷

At the public meeting called by N.H. Thomas and Claudius May in April 1918 at the Wilberforce Memorial Hall, J.H. Thomas declared that the idea of a West African Conference was neither visionary nor impracticable; on the contrary, he said, there were precedents from which to learn, such as the little-known Pan-African Conference called by Booker T. Washington in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1912 ('inspired possibly by the Universal Races Conference which it immediately followed'). That Conference, he said, was attended by Afroamerican delegates, delegates from the West Indies, South Africa and a few from West Africa, but was organisationally unsound as 'the great diversity of interests, not to speak of the distance, robbed the Conference of interest and importance as far as Africa was concerned'.⁷⁸ The South African Native Congress and the Indian

77. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 5/1/1918: "Proposed West African Conference - Organisational Proposals by S.T. Jones".

78. *Ibid.*, 27/4/1918, pp. 8-9. For an account of the Tuskegee Conference of 1912, see Louis R. Harlan: "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden". The American Historical Review, vol. LXXI, No. 2, January 1966, pp. 464-467. According to Harlan, Washington 'ignored the important but controversial issues of race and nationalism'; a letter from J.E. Casely Hayford to Washington declared that 'There is an African Nationality, and when the Aborigines of the Gold Coast and other parts of West Africa have joined forces with our brethren in America arriving at a national aim, purpose, and inspiration, then indeed, will it be possible for our brethren over the sea to bring home metaphorically to their nation and people a great spoil', quoted in Harlan, *op.cit.*, pp. 465-466. It is interesting
[Contd.]

National Congress, said J.H. Thomas, were more relevant examples to the immediate objectives of the projected West African Conference, especially as the Indian National Congress 'has been the means of securing many privileges for the people, including an open door in the Civil Service for their talented sons; it has given India a policy and shape to its national ideals and aspirations'. Although the British West African colonies were not territorially contiguous, sea and postal communications had made inter-communications easier; in any case, their common grievances under colonial rule would always afford an area of agreement.⁷⁹

Mr. A.S. Hebron, a local barrister, presided at the Wilberforce Hall meeting; a lively interest was shown in the Conference idea, and the attendance was 'large and unusually representative'.⁸⁰

78. Contd.] to note that although leading West African nationalist intellectuals generally approved of racial movements among Afroamericans and were enthusiastic about their educational institutions, they always insisted that their political and ideological interests were different. Content analysis of the West African press on West African reactions to pan-Negro movements from the Tuskegee Conference to the Garvey and Pan-African movement of Du Bois bears out this observation. Of particular interest are the writings of E.W. Blyden, Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound (London, 1911) and the unpublished manuscript of W.E.G. Sekyi The Parting of the Ways (1925) which the writer found in the Sekyi Papers at Cape Coast. Three chapters of this last named work are devoted to a critical examination of Afroamerican claims to political leadership of Africa; here Marcus Garvey comes out in a favourable light, although his political pretensions and American republicanism are rejected.

79. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, op.cit.

80. *Ibid.*, 4/5/1918, p. 5.

The Hon. J.H. Thomas⁸¹ opened the meeting, explaining how he and Claudius May were approached by Casely Hayford and Dr. Savage respectively in 1917 about the possibility of a Conference. After a few speeches, J.A. Fitzjohn moved the first Resolution which read:

That this meeting of Sierra Leoneans welcomes the proposal of a West African Conference, in the belief that it will have the effect of bringing the peoples in the British West African Colonies into closer union, of stimulating interest in matters concerning their common welfare, and of giving increased weight to public opinion in West Africa; and further pledges itself to do all in its power to promote such a Conference at as early a date as circumstances will permit.

Mr. Fitzjohn made an eloquent plea for the Conference movement, in the course of which he observed that Sierra Leone, being the oldest of the British West African Colonies, should have spearheaded the movement; there were those who said that there was neither public opinion nor public spirit in Freetown: this was so, he said, in the 'portals of the rich and highly placed, but not in the street corners and market places'. The Rev. Orishatuke Faduma, cultural nationalist and ideologue to Chief Sam's abortive Back to Africa Movement of 1914, who seconded the resolution, said that 'the idea of co-operation between different Negro communities

81. The Hon. J.H. Thomas was born in 1846 at Hastings village near Freetown and was 'probably the oldest merchant in Freetown'. At 14 he went to Rionunez, a neighbouring French territory with his uncle, a trader, and remained for seven years. He became a book-keeper in Freetown with the Company of African Merchants Ltd.; resigned in 1872 and started his own business as a general merchant at Malamah. He later moved to Freetown as his business expanded in 1882. He was a member of the Legislative Council from 1907 to 1912 and was reappointed in 1915; became Mayor of Freetown eight times - 1905-1907, 1910, 1912-13, 1914-15. He was known locally as Malamah Thomas; died in 1925 - Allister Macmillan, op.cit., p.269. The Sierra Leone Weekly News wrote his obituary in verse, calling him 'Sa Leone's Grand Old Man' and 'our late J.H.T.' Sierra Leone Weekly News, 25/2/25.

had long commended itself to him. Before the war, arrangements were being made for a visit of Afro-American teachers and agriculturalists to West Africa. He believed a British West African Conference would do a lot of good.' 'Politics apart', he continued, 'it would be excellent if doctors, lawyers, educationalists, agriculturists and merchants could meet with their confreres from other Colonies, and exchange ideas with a view to mutual improvement. Many unfair criticisms levelled at the Native were due to ignorance. If the Conference could publish a comprehensive statement of the achievements of the native, it would go far towards disarming criticism of that sort.'⁸² Faduma's speech seems to have created some confusion, for as the editorial commented:

As soon as the discussion began the atmosphere became warm. Professor Faduma had unwittingly created the impression that he held that politics would be beyond the scope of the Conference. This, however, he corrected.⁸³

A few speakers were critical of the Conference idea and criticised its promoters for not previously issuing programmes and for not explaining its strategy: 'the project of a Conference was very alluring, but what about the modus operandi?' The opposition, however, was pacified when the Rev. J.T. Roberts, seconded by Mr. J.S.T. Davies, moved a second resolution providing for the appointment of a committee. It was carried unanimously, and read:

That this meeting appoint a committee of twelve gentlemen with power to add to their number and to select such officers as they think needful, and that this committee be empowered to make all the preparations necessary for the

82. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 27/4/1918, pp. 8-9.

83. *Ibid.*

participation of Sierra Leone in the Conference of British West African Colonies at as early a date as circumstances will permit.⁸⁴

A committee of twelve was appointed, the names being suggested by Claudius May, but others present at the meeting felt that the new committee had been packed or pre-arranged, and there were protests. The meeting was adjourned for May 6th in the same Hall. Mr. Hebron again presided. After some disagreement on the procedure for electing the twelve-man committee, they finally got down to electing them by acclamation and by show of hands. Thirty people were nominated, and by elimination, the required number was secured. These were:- the Hon. J.H. Thomas, A.S. Hebron, C. May, S. Barlatt (the Mayor of Freetown),⁸⁵ L.E.V. M'Carthy, Professor O. Daduma, S.J. Coker, R.C.P. Barlatt, Dr. G.N. Metzger, J.A. Songo Davies, A.E. Tuboku Metzger and J.A. Fitzjohn, Professor Faduma was elected in absentia, but had sent a draft for the organisation of the West African Congress grand committee, which merits full quotation, in view of the little we know about this obscure but important figure in the development of cultural nationalism in Sierra Leone:

84. Ibid.

85. S.J.S. Barlatt was born in 1867; educated at the C.M.S. Grammar School and Fourah Bay College. Acted as chief clerk to the Royal Garrison Artillery before going to study law in England in 1906. Called to the Bar (Gray's Inn) in 1909; M.A. (Dunelm) 1909. Practised in Freetown from 1910; elected Mayor on 11/11/1918. He was part owner with his brother, R.C.P. Barlatt, in their father's general merchandise business which had been established in 1876. A. Macmillan, op.cit., p. 271. Barlatt was influential in local politics, and with Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright, was instrumental in restoring order after the rice and anti-Syrian riots in 1919. Barlatt was also a vigorous defender of the Congress movement, giving the London Congress delegation of 1920-21 a recommendation as the bona fide representatives of their various territories; in spite of his nationalist activities, he was re-elected Mayor in 1921.

WORK AND SCOPE OF THE CONFERENCE OF BRITISH WEST AFRICA -SUGGESTIONS BY PROF. O. FADUMA:

I believe the majority of those invited to the Wilberforce Memorial Hall last week have accepted the idea of a Conference to consider the interest of British West Africa. What that interest is must be a subject for study and consideration. No one has a scheme cut and dried to lay before the Conference after its inauguration. It is now open to all patriots to put on their thinking caps and after very serious consideration send their thoughts to the Committee that is to be formed, or use the public press for information. I am therefore offering a few suggestions to the public.

A CONFERENCE OF PATRIOTIC WORKERS:

My humble opinion is that the men needed for the proposed Conference are practical men of affairs, workers and doers, men of intense patriotism to their country and loyalty to the British Government, not debaters who would waste time on parliamentary technicalities and verbal bubbles. The other kind of men needed must be experts who would enlighten the people on matters requiring painstaking investigations, matters which the public are either ignorant of, or if they know anything about them, they know them in a hazy way and are not able to marshal facts in a clear scientific manner to prove their points.

SCOPE OF THE CONFERENCE

The interests of British West Africa and of its natives are many. By the term "natives" I mean the black people of its Colonies and Protectorates, and by "black people" I mean people of Negro or African origin, whether one hundred per cent or any fraction per cent of Negro blood, creoles or non-creoles. It is therefore desirable that a representative Committee should be formed such as will include the different vocations and are fit to be their mouthpiece. They should not be paid for their services except probably the Secretary or Secretaries by common consent. I suggest the selection of an Executive Committee of a very limited number, say six, men of cool judgment and common sense, out of the General Committee, to look after the execution of well-digested plans, as well as a Financial Committee to raise funds, if necessary, and a Programme Committee to which all subjects for discussion or investigation should be submitted for final approval by the General Committee.

I should be glad if invitation is extended to leading philanthropists, students of political and social science, Ethnologists, businessmen and missionaries of the white race who are known to be interested in the development of West Africa,

to give us the result of their experience in written form and if possible, to be present at the Conference. We should invite criticism if offered constructively, by our white friends. It should not be a Conference of flatterers. We should endeavour to find the happy mean between what we think of ourselves and what others think of us.

DIVISION OF LABOUR

To do thoroughly the work of the Conference there must be work for everyone, and a division into departments of work. There should be a Department of Political and Social questions, either separately or jointly. The men selected to speak in the department of Politics should be largely our legal men and representatives in our local legislature. I know of no better way to use our native legal talent for the good of the race..... In matters of social life there are men among us who have made it their life study, some of whom are now retired Government officials Native political and social institutions should be given their proper place in the Conference, as the future of the race is involved. How far these institutions should give way to European ones, and how far the process of making black men white should be carried require thoughtful handling by our native thinkers.

Then there is the Industrial Department which should include agricultural education in all its branches and how they may be furthered in a practical way. There is also the Department of Business and Economics, the question of consumer and producer, of Trade monopolies, of the Land Question as it affects natives and the foreigner, of indefinite land leases. All these are mere suggestive not exhaustive presentations of what a Conference such as is now proposed may do. They are presented with the hope that they will stimulate thought and prompt others to suggest, so that the Committee's work may be lightened.⁸⁶

Faduma's draft scheme was certainly both functional and idealistic, and had the N.C.B.W.A. adopted such a scheme, perhaps with a few modifications, the movement would have been far more coherent, effective and better able to refute the criticisms of the Colonial Office and of Sir Hugh Clifford. As a member of the American Academy of Social and Political Science, and as one who had observed American machine politics, perhaps Faduma was in a better

86. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 11/5/1918, p. 8.

position to appreciate the advantages of sound organisation and political realism.

By May, it was decided that the main functions of the newly established local congress committee (which had the power to add to its number) were:- to prepare the various topics to be brought before the projected West African Conference, to disseminate information as to the aims of the movement and to campaign for support, to establish contact with other Congress committees in the colonies 'to settle all the business preliminaries', and if possible to establish a Women's Auxiliary of the Committee.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, Faduma's scheme was taken up enthusiastically by The Gold Coast Independent:

We are in entire agreement with the Professor (Faduma's) suggestions, and the sooner they are acted upon throughout British West Africa, the better. The economic situation brought about by the world war now ought to stimulate the best thought. After all, thoughts and conferences will be useless unless backed by sacrifices of time and money

Let committees - practical, and not talking committees - be formed as early as possible in all the various towns on the Sierra Leone model, and let us get to business at once.⁸⁸

The Freetown local committee co-opted Mayor Barlatt in December 1918, and invited twenty others to join the committee. These included 'clergymen, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, artisans, and, last but not least, a prominent member of the Mohammedan community'.⁸⁹ E.S. Beoku Betts advised that subjects like the colour bar, the position of Africans in the British Empire, Medical appointment of Africans in the Civil Service, finance,

87. Ibid.

88. The Gold Coast Independent, 22/6/1918.

89. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 14/12/1918, p. 5.

representative government and trade monopolies should be included in the programme of the forthcoming Conference which, he thought, ought to be published before hand, as the Conference was not a subversive body. The Conference, in his view, should be 'not so much of an enlarged or enhanced debating Society, as a practical assembly of practical men.'⁹⁰

Apparently the local committee met at irregular intervals between the latter part of 1918 and early 1919, primarily because they feared that progress in Lagos and the Gold Coast was too uncertain for the Freetown committee to go ahead with its plans. Within that period additional members to the Freetown local committee included Archdeacon Wilson, the Rev. F.H. Johnson, Rev. J.B. Nicol, Rev. H.M. Steady, Rev. A.T. Sumner, Councillors E.A.C. Davies, E.A.C. Noah, D.C. Parker, J. Jenkins Johnson, Dr. Abayomi Cole, E.S. Beoku Betts, M.S. Brown, H. Deen, W.P. Golley, S.T. Jones, J.F. Knox, J.S. Labour, J.B. Luke, T.G. Reffel, J.T. Richards, H.C. Solomon, and S.D. Turner. Press, clerical and lay sub-committees were formed to educate the populace about the Conference; the clergy was particularly useful in public meetings.⁹¹

It will be seen from the list of members of the Sierra Leone Congress committee, that the leadership was overwhelmingly middle class Creole, with the exception of a few Creolised Mohammedans - who were included for the purpose of demonstrating a non-existent

90. Ibid.

91. The Sierra Leone Weekly News quoted in The Gold Coast Leader, 15/3/1919, p. 3.

Colony/Protectorate unity of purpose. What strikes the observer is the preponderance of clergymen, lawyers, doctors and journalists, together with a fair sprinkling of traders. Numerically, the Creole colonial elite was inferior; politically, though they no longer occupied top jobs in the administration (as a result of the changed tempo of imperial rule towards the end of the nineteenth century),⁹² they still dominated the all-important Legislative and municipal councils, education and the legal profession. Creole middle men, although suffering from the economic effects of the War and from Syrian and foreign competition, were still relatively prosperous, though quite a number had lost their business in the Protectorate to the astute Syrian traders. These factors, together with unemployment after the Great War and the rise in food prices, created an atmosphere in which they could easily assert their leadership. History, and the socio-economic values they had inherited justly led them to claim the position of 'natural rulers'. Here, then was a situation characteristic of most colonial nationalist movements where an educated minority came to see itself as the natural leaders of 'the people', even if in reality their social position, and the nature of colonial rule, disqualified them from claiming such a role. As further analysis will show, when we discuss the economic aspects of the nationalism of the period under review, it was this socially dominant group in Freetown whose interests were most affected in the rice and anti-Syrian riots of 1919 and the deteriorating economic conditions of the immediate

92. For an account of the socio-economic factors in Europe which led to this change in imperial attitudes see R. Delavignette, Christianity and Colonialism (London, 1964), pp. 43-46.

post-war years.⁹³ To this intelligentsia of 'displaced and blocked persons',⁹⁴ nationalism meant glorification of the Negro Race, laissez-faire, constitutionalism and 'ordered liberty'. They employed the language of democracy, yet representative government to them meant the representation of the propertied few - or 'the better class of people', as they described themselves.

The politics of the Sierra Leone Congress committee generally followed the pattern of the Gambia committee; lobbying the administration through deputations, memorials and telegrams had become a standard technique. Like the Gambia committee, the Sierra Leone committee also tried to secure the support of non-Creole community leaders in Freetown. For example, in March 1921, led by their local secretary Mr. E.S. Beoku Betts, the local committee dispatched a telegram directly to the Colonial Office, without the knowledge of the Governor. The telegram was signed by only one of the unofficial Creole members of the Legislative Council; among the community leaders, only Almami Fofana, head of the Mandingo community appended his signature to the telegram; but even he had lost much of his political importance.⁹⁵ On April 18th

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93. For the history and sociology of Creole society see C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone (O.U.P., 1962), A.T. Porter: Creoledom (O.U.P., 1963); Martin Kilson: "Sierra Leone Politics: The Approach to Independence", West Africa, vol. 44, p. 688, June 18, 1960; also Kilson's "Nationalism and Social Classes in West Africa", Journal of Politics, vol. XX, 1958, pp. 368-387. also T.C. Luke: "The Creoles and their Land, Sierra Leone Studies, No. XXI, Jan. 1939, pp. 53-66; H.M. Awoyo Johnson, *ibid.*, "The Vocational Outlook of the Sierra Leone Creole", pp.52-57.
94. Karl Mannheim: Essays on the Sociology of Culture (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956) ed. E. Mannheim and Paul Kecskemeti, p. 145.
95. C.O. 551/2290, 23/4/21, Governor Wilkinson to Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

1921, at a public meeting which was attended by leading citizens, church dignitaries, Mohammedan Almami's and chiefs, the local committee, in response to Lord Milner's rejection of the N.C.B.W.A. petition, condemned Milner's views as 'erroneous' and contended that the reforms demanded by the Congress were 'in accordance with the British Constitution' and had the support of the whole population. Cornelius May, a member of the Legislative Council, J.H. Thomas (president of the local congress committee), Archdeacon Wilson, Chief Fofana and Alimami Usman (representing the Mohammedan community) were present at that meeting.⁹⁶

Perhaps the granting of limited elective representation to Sierra Leone in 1924 owed much to Governor Wilkinson who, in general, was milder in his criticisms of the N.C.B.W.A. Unlike the other British West African territories, Sierra Leone was fortunate in having a Governor who had 'every sympathy with progress towards self-Government', though he disapproved of the methods of agitation adopted by the local committee.⁹⁷

Throughout 1921 and 1922 the agitation of the local committee was mainly directed against the decision of the Colonial Office in 1921; on the whole, enthusiastic support was still given to the Congress movement in spite of the failure of the 1920-21 London delegation. In January-February 1923 the second Session of the N.C.B.W.A. met in Freetown. This important meeting gained the full support of the social elite of Freetown; it was preceded by an impressive church service which was extensively reported in the

96. Ibid., copy of telegram from Governor Wilkinson to Winston Churchill, 23/4/21.

97. Ibid.

press. It was at this Session also that the Constitution of the N.C.B.W.A. was ratified, in which the functions of President, General Secretary, Executive Council, Financial Secretary and Central Executive Committee were laid down, and rules of debate formulated. It was also proposed to start a journal of the Congress, to be called The British West African National Review, in which 'all elections, charges, notices, news or reports of Sections and Local Committees shall be published'. The Secretary of each local committee was to make quarterly reports to the General Secretary, whose office was to be at Sekondi. It was also agreed that the various local committees should be allowed to 'enact bye-laws for their government, provided the said bye-laws do not conflict with the Constitution and general laws and rules of the National Congress of British West Africa'.⁹⁸ One clause in the Constitution, significantly enough, dealt with economic co-operation in West Africa:

That the Congress shall, in order to promote the co-operation of the peoples of the British West African Dependencies and their economic development, educate public opinion as to the African Financiers and others promoting business combinations in such wise as shall inspire and maintain a British West African economical development.⁹⁹

In spite of its defects and the narrow basis of its leadership, strong claims can perhaps be made for the N.C.B.W.A. as the first attempt in Africa at pan-Africanism on a regional basis; the Constitution of the N.C.B.W.A. has all the features of an interterritorial assembly. A major criticism that can be levelled

98. The Constitution of the National Congress of British West Africa, pp. 3-6.

99. Ibid., p. 5.

against it is that it was not coherent or fully institutionalised. For example, paragraph 22 of the Constitution which dealt with the important offices of President and Executive Council reads:

The business and affairs of the National Congress of British West Africa shall be directed, managed, and controlled by the President and an Executive Council composed of himself, the Vice President, the Treasurer, where and when practicable, and other persons not exceeding seven in number easily accessible to him, who shall be nominated by him, and who shall execute the will of the National Congress in the light of resolutions passed when last assembled and shall be competent to act on behalf of the Congress in all cases of emergency until the Congress shall next assemble.

Such an unworkable scheme was typically the creation of lay gents. What is important, however, is not its failure as a pan-West African organisation, but the very fact of its inception. One very careful student of this organisation of the West African intelligentsia was Kwame Nkrumah, and it comes as no surprise when, with his passion for organisation, he revived the idea in 1946 in the form of the West African National Secretariat, putting great emphasis on the office of the co-ordinating role of Secretary-General.

(III)

THE GOLD COAST SECTION OF THE N.C.B.W.A.

The interesting and complicated story of the Gold Coast Section, which was the nucleus of the Congress movement, has already been told in great detail.¹⁰⁰ All that will be done here is to

100. La Ray Denzer, op.cit., David Kimble: A Political History of Ghana: 1850-1928 (O.U.P., 1963), pp. 374-403.

give a brief account of the movement in the Gold Coast as we have done in the case of the other territorial committees; in this case, material not available to either Denzer¹⁰¹ or Kimble will be used to clarify a few points.

The origins and politics of the Gold Coast Section cannot be understood in isolation from the all-important Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, the pivot of all nationalist politics in the Gold Coast from 1897 to the second decade of the twentieth century.¹⁰² In fact, by 1914 the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. was in decline, still clinging to the old methods of agitation since the successful Lands deputation of 1898; thereafter it remained largely a Cape Coast affair, a shadow of its former glory. By 1912, '... the Society had lost, and was never to recapture, the political initiative in the Gold Coast. Their main trouble arose not so much from lack of government recognition ... nor from any lack of interest in constitutional development ... but largely from their inability to adapt the leisurely, parochial techniques of nineteenth century Cape Coast politics to the more militant outlook and wider horizons of the twentieth century'.¹⁰³ The development of race consciousness after the Great War, reinforced by Wilsonian idealism, together with the economic effects of the War, led to the emergence of a younger, idealistic group within the basically conservative A.R.P.S., seeking to use that body as the vehicle of

101. Miss Denzer's sources are mostly from Gold Coast newspapers; the Archives at Cape Coast contain some correspondence she seems to have overlooked.

102. For an account of the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. see D. Kimble, *op.cit.*, pp. 330-374.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 374.

its idealism. This in turn, implied a redefinition of the political objectives of the A.R.P.S., and a sharing of traditional authority with the younger element. Although it would be inaccurate to describe what happened within the A.R.P.S. between 1914 and 1921 as a power struggle, the dispute over objectives between the traditional leadership and Casely Hayford's pan-African group was not resolved until 1921 when the old guard of the Executive Committee of the A.R.P.S. were swept out of their positions.

It would appear that the antagonism between Casely Hayford and the older, more conservative leadership of the A.R.P.S. had existed even before 1914.¹⁰⁴ According to W.E.G. Sekyi:

... the trouble that arose in the Society, which the prompted imagination of Mr. Wight¹⁰⁵ dates "from the time of the West African National Congress", started very many years before Mr. Casely Hayford first mooted the idea of the Congress. The rift started as a result of rivalry between Mr. Casely Hayford and Mr. E.J.P. Brown, said to have a very unedifying origin in London, when both these gentlemen, with Dr. B.J. Quartey-Papafio, and Mr. T.F.E. Jones, many times President of the Society, were on the Forest Bill Delegation (1912). At any rate, when the rivalry became most noteworthy, the cause appeared to be the M.B.E. which had been conferred on Mr. Casely Hayford for work done in connection with the collection of money for the Red Cross Fund during the War. At that time, Mr. Casely Hayford, who no less than Mr. E.J.P. Brown, always wanted to head some movement or other apart from what the Society was organising, set up a separate organisation for the collection of Red Cross contributions from chiefs in the Western Province who were all members of the Society ...¹⁰⁶

104. Kimble dates it from 1914, op.cit., p. 376.

105. Martin Wight is author of The Development of the Gold Coast Legislative Council; the Sekyi Papers contain several review articles written by Sekyi himself, attacking much of Wight's account of the Gold Coast Legislative Council. It is only fair to mention here that Sekyi resented Wight's criticisms of his attitude to the 1925 Constitution and of his political outlook in general.

106. Kobina Sekyi Papers, Cape Coast Regional Archives, 461/64, paper on "Our Political Education".

The chiefs who were asked to contribute to Casely Hayford's collection were puzzled as the A.R.P.S. had already started a fund of its own, with the Axim Branch collecting for the Western Province. Casely Hayford's conduct was then reported to the Axim Branch to which he belonged, 'and Mr. Hayford, who was noted for his agility whenever he tried to get out of an awkward situation, began to skip'.¹⁰⁷ The angry A.R.P.S. accused Hayford of seeing things from an 'imperial' point of view and roundly told him that charity began at home,¹⁰⁸ but in reality they were jealous of his initiative and ambition:

The members of the Executive Committee at Cape Coast, who knew all about Mr. Casely Hayford's tendency to evade the provisions of the Constitution as often as he could, several of whom regarded him with suspicion, eventually became definitely antagonistic to him. Mr. E.J.P. Brown, a much younger and less eminent man who nevertheless would brook no rival, was one of the members of the Executive Committee. He was a Fanti (Abura) whilst Mr. Casely Hayford was an Asebu (Moree) man. The mutual dislike of these two politicians became more and more intensified. Mr. Brown was strongly supported by the Fanti clique in the Executive - Abura, Anamaboe, Nkusukum¹⁰⁹

When E.J.P. Brown was nominated a member of the Legislative Council in 1916 (the same year Casely Hayford entered the Legislative Council) he made the acquaintance of a rising young chief of the Nsonna clan, Nana Ofori Atta, Omanhene of Akyini Abuakwa, a favourite of Sir Hugh Clifford and his Colonial Secretary Mr. (later Sir) Alexander Ransford Slater. 'Mr. Brown being himself of the Nsonna clan, and being fond of 'high company', soon formed an alliance with this rising young Chief.¹¹⁰

107. Ibid.

108. D. Kimble, op.cit., p. 376.

109. Kobina Sekyi Papers, op.cit. See also D. Kimble, op.cit., p. 378, note 5.

110. Ibid.

It was against this background of jealousy and personal rivalry that Casely Hayford and his supporters along the West coast were campaigning for a West African Conference. The Conference idea itself was originally suggested by West Africa, from an imperial point of view,¹¹¹ and was taken up by the West African press in 1917. Already in the Gold Coast Nana Ofori Atta and T. Hutton Mills, a member of the Casely Hayford school of thought, had disagreed on the scope and objectives of such a West African movement.¹¹² In early 1918 The Gold Coast Leader reminded its readers that West Africa was 'entitled to a representation at the Imperial reconstruction after the war. On no account must we go to sleep over that all-important desideratum.¹¹³ Division of opinion on the scope of West African representation in London after the War, however, became crystallised when in May 1918 Casely Hayford and E.J.P. Brown, the legal advisers of the A.R.P.S., disagreed over the procedure to be adopted in the petition for elective representation: was the petition to embrace 'united West Africa' or was it to follow the well-tried methods of the A.R.P.S. which the pan-African group considered obsolete?

Several meetings between the Casely Hayford group (which had already started to form local committees of the projected West African Conference at Sekondi in the Western Province with Casely Hayford, Awoonor Williams and R.J. Hayfron as officials. T. Hutton Mills was president of the Eastern Province section.) and the

111. D. Kimble, op.cit., p. 377.

112. Ibid., p. 377.

113. The Gold Coast Leader, 2/2/1918, pp. 3-4.

members of the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee were held between August 1918 and January 1920 in order to secure the support of the A.R.P.S. Prominent among the advocates of a wider pan-West African movement were Awoonor Williams, the Rev. O. Pinanko, Mr. D.M. Abadoo, K. Ata Amonoo, T. Hutton Mills, H. Van Hein, W.W. Brew, the Rev. Mark Hayford, W.E.G. Sekyi and most important, the Ga Mantse. Of these, Sekyi, Pinanko, the two Hayfords, Prince Ata Amonu and Van Hein were on the Executive Committee of the A.R.P.S. Another meeting of the Amanhin and Ahinful (Kings and Chiefs) of the Central and Western Provinces with the A.R.P.S. Executive was held at Cape Coast in September 1918 (September 19th to September 21st). At that meeting the Conference idea was brought up again, but this merely served to confirm the differing points of view within the A.R.P.S. After the meeting The Gold Coast Leader commented:

The day is past forever in Gold Coast history when in public movements the people's representatives can meekly bow to what emanates from self-elected authorities We have among our Amanhin trained minds and the new blood that has entered into Gold Coast politics can also give a good account of itself.¹¹⁴

Another editorial dealt more extensively with the meeting, and considered the proposed West African Conference 'by far the most important question discussed' at the Cape Coast Conference, in particular as the discussion had brought to the open the divergence of opinion on the desirability of a West African Conference. The majority of the Chiefs were reported to be in favour of a West African Conference and a joint petition to H.M.'s

114. Ibid., 28/9/1918, p. 3.

Government for the granting of elective councils. But 'a few of the members of the Executive Committee of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society also spoke, but so pessimistically that the Natural Rulers finding their 'Doctors disagree', expressed themselves in full sympathy with the scheme,' but decided to wait before committing themselves.¹¹⁵ E.J.P. Brown, supoorting the anti-Hayford group of the Executive Committee, criticised the Conference idea as unnecessary, pointing out that Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Jamaica had only attained elective Legislative Councils gradually; he thought that the West African colonies should send petitions separately but simultaneously to the Colonial Office. Brown was supported by J.E. Biney, President of the A.R.P.S., T.F.E. Jones, an ex-President, and William Coleman, vice-President. On the second day of the conference, it appeared that some of the chiefs had come round to supporting the Hayford group, and were urging provincial co-operation to achieve the formation of the Gold Coast branch of the Conference; on that day, T.F.E. Jones and E.J.P. Brown 'were conspicuous by their absence'.¹¹⁶ On the third day of the conference, however, they reappeared and again criticised the proposed West African Conference 'as much as their breadth could allow them'. Casely Hayford and Van Hein had already addressed the A.R.P.S. Committee on behalf of the Gold Coast local committee of the projected Conference, but already it

115. Ibid., 5-12/10/1918, p. 2: "The Conference of the Amanhin and Ahinfu of the Central and Western Provinces and the Proposed West African Conference".

116. Ibid.

was becoming clear that they could not carry the A.R.P.S. with them, and The Gold Coast Leader openly blamed the conservatives on the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee for the deadlock caused by 'certain persons who have cliqued together that anything not introduced by them should be considered useless Is it not true that the two Deputations sent to Downing Street re the Lands and Forestry Bills, our people asked to be allowed to elect their own men to the Legislative Council? If so, has the time not yet arrived?'¹¹⁷

A stronger article appeared in the form of an open letter to E.J.P. Brown, accusing the latter of occupying 'a false position in the confidence of the people;' it also went on to challenge him to declare his position on the Conference project 'in the public interest', since those who posed as guides of the people should be unambiguous. The letter then went on to compare Brown very unfavourably with John Mensah Sarbah. If the latter were alive, the Leader did not doubt that he would have been the first 'to reshape the Aborigines Society as to meet the exigencies of the times' i.e. use a relatively conservative body to make articulate Congress views; but Brown, it went on, was not receptive to new ideas; and though he could still mesmerise "the old fogies" who monopolised the presidential offices of the A.R.P.S., it was the considered opinion of the Leader that Brown was 'a hopeless case'. Brown was curtly told that there was a 'new world-a-comin' 'after the War, and that it was 'evident that old fossilised ideas must

117. Ibid.

give place to new'.¹¹⁸ By the end of 1918, however, ad hoc committees of the projected Conference were being formed in the territories concerned, but the Leader had still not yet settled accounts with the opposition which it described as 'cantankerous persons who would oppose the advent of the Millenium itself if the Almighty did not first take them into His confidence'.

In 1919 W.F. Hutchison, a Gold Coast journalist working for Duse Mohamed Ali's The African Times and Orient Review in London visited the Gold Coast. Hutchison, who was later to take a prominent part in the affairs of the London based African Progress Union and in giving publicity to the Pan African Congresses in West African newspapers, belonged to 'one of the most ancient and illustrious families',¹¹⁹ in the Gold Coast, and had been an extraordinary member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council in 1887, after which he went to England, staying there for twenty years, returning for a visit in 1919.¹²⁰ During his visit, Hutchison met members of the A.R.P.S. and addressed them on May 13th and 16th on various post-war questions, including the Empire Resources Development Committee; he also urged them to 'take advantage of the reconstruction of the British Empire, which would follow on the return to peace, by sending Representatives to England during the sittings of the Imperial Conference He pointed out that any action taken by the British West African Colonies should be

118. Ibid., p. 3.

119. Ibid., May 31st - June 7th, 1919, p. 3; Kimble, op.cit., p.456.

120. Kimble, op.cit., p. 546.

jointly carried out by the four colonies acting in concert, and that the influence exercised by a joint delegation would be vastly greater than that of four separate delegations.' Hutchison also advised concentration on elective representation and co-operation with the Chambers of Commerce in London and Liverpool to secure this objective.¹²¹ This was ammunition enough for Casely Hayford and his group. The Leader again castigated the conservatives of the A.R.P.S. Executive Committee who might refuse to publish Hutchison's address in their organ The Gold Coast Nation, and 'whose delight is to assume a non possumus attitude with respect to any new ideas that don't fit in with their brain capacity'. In the eyes of the A.R.P.S. conservatives, Hutchison had 'committed the unpardonable sin of referring to the supreme necessity' of a West African Conference.

From mid 1919 to early 1920 the Conference group toured various areas campaigning for the Conference project. Already local committees had been formed in Western and Eastern Provinces; in early 1920, after a delegation led by Casely Hayford, Van Hein, Rev. Pinanko and Prince Ata Amonu to Elmina, a branch was opened there; a local committee was also started at Tarkwa, with H. Vroom as secretary.¹²² But the 'Anti-Progressive Party', led by E.J.P. Brown, J.E. Biney, T.F.E. Jones, W. Coleman, W.S. Johnstone, George Amissah and the Rev. Ebenezer A. Sackey, were also opposing the movement in the columns of The Gold Coast Nation, declaring that it was the business of the natural rulers, not the educated

121. The Gold Coast Leader, May 31st - June 7th, 1919, p. 3.

122. Ibid., Jan. 3-10, 1920.

youngmen, to initiate such movements.

In the end the Casely Hayford group won the tactical battle of convening a West African Conference in Accra in March 1920; psychologically, they had good reasons for congratulating themselves on this momentous occasion, but they still had to win the more important war within the executive of the A.R.P.S. if the new pan-West African movement was to be run smoothly from Axim. The second phase of the struggle between the two groups in the A.R.P.S. assumed greater scope and importance when the 1920-21 London Congress Delegation, having failed to convince Lord Milner that West Africa was ready for elective representation and that they the N.C.B.W.A. were the true representatives of 'the people', returned empty handed, angry at what it thought was a stab in the back by their opponents at home, particularly Nana Ofori Atta, Nana Amonoo V Omanhene of Anomabu, E.J.P. Brown and Dr. B.W. Quartey-Papafio of the Gold Coast. Even before the return of the Delegation, a flood of telegrams from several Gold Coast chiefs denouncing Nana Ofori Atta's Legislative Council speech had reached the Colonial Office; even in Freetown (Sierra Leone) marked hostility towards Ofori Atta was evident in the press. Further propaganda by the various Congress committees in the Gold Coast resulted in the adherence of a few more chiefs to the Congress movement.¹²³

Politically, Nana Ofori Atta and his group had blundered in their back door attack on the Congress; technically, however,

123. D. Kimble, op.cit., p. 393.

there was very little Casely Hayford and his group could complain about: their joint petition was a combination of the relevant and the irrelevant, and their tactics in London were not as sustained or professional as they ought to have been. Moreover, although the majority of the Amanhene were in favour of the Congress, it must be remembered that Nana Ofori Atta, an intelligent and enlightened traditional ruler, had secured the authority of a majority of the Amanhene of the Eastern Province to speak on their behalf; he had also received 'on behalf of the Central and Western Provinces a mandate from the Executive Council of the Aborigines Society to oppose the Congress movement'.¹²⁴

Casely Hayford carried the attack on Nana Ofori Atta into the Legislative Council in April 1921; in a series of verbal battles he rebutted the latter's claim that the educated class had no claims to political leadership and accused his group of treachery to the Congress movement.¹²⁵ With the support of the Ga Mantse, all that remained now was to capture the leadership of the A.R.P.S., and this was achieved at its meeting in July 1921. There can be no doubt that the manoeuvres of the Gold Coast Section of the N.C.B.W.A. had sufficiently impressed the administration to acknowledge Nana Ofori Atta's mistake and even to concede that reforms were truly necessary. As one minute paper put it in late 1921: 'We can only wait now for the various electoral schemes to be put forward no further action is necessary at present.'¹²⁶

124. Kobina Taylor: "Our Political Destiny - a paper in commemoration of the 43rd Year of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, August 1941", pp. 7-8.

125. D. Kimble, op.cit., pp. 393-396.

126. Ghana National Archives, ADM 11/1427, Case No. 1/1921: Colonial Secretary's Minute Papers. 15884/21, 26/8/21.

Another official commented:

..... the vast majority of the Chiefs have come round to support the Congress movement. The Omanhin of Fanti Nyankumassi informed me that before the Congress went to England, they explained the nature of these proposals to the Chiefs, and that had they waited a little longer, formal approval would have been given and money found for them for their expenses,

although this policy of the Chiefs was at variance with an earlier resolution passed by the Chiefs in September 1918 and confirmed in May, 1919, which had not been rescinded when the Chiefs gave approval to the Congress in 1920. After observing that there was very little difference between the contending groups in the A.R.P.S. about the desirability of reforms, the dispatch concluded:

There is also no doubt that the bulk of the Chiefs represented at the recent Conference (Cape Coast Conference of July 1921) are now whole heartedly in favour of the Congress movement, and I think that their lead will followed (sic) by the majority of those who were not present¹²⁷

In the complicated history of the politics of the Gold Coast Section, sometimes the politics of chieftaincy got entangled in Congress affairs. In the course of the struggle between the Congress supporters and the conservative group of the A.R.P.S., relations between Nana Ofori Atta, Omanhene of Akim Abuakwa, a leading critic of the Congress, and Tackie Yaoboi, the Ga Mantse a leading supporter of the Congress among the traditional rulers, became strained, particularly after the former was booed after a heated Legislative Council meeting on April 24th, 1921, during

127. H.E.G. Bartlett, Acting Provincial Commissioner, Central Province, to the Acting Colonial Secretary, Accra, No. 456/C.P.151/1921, 22/8/21. G.N.A.; also The Gold Coast Independent, 25/6/21, p. 171.

which Casely Hayford made his major attack on Nana Ofori Atta. The administration, which had prompted Nana Ofori Atta to ask the supporters of the Ga Mantse for an apology, wrote to the Ga Mantse complaining of his treatment, but so seriously did the latter espouse the cause of the intelligentsia that he merely sent in a rather non-committal reply, avoiding any apology.¹²⁸

The Ga Mantsê's support of the Congress also provided his opponents in the Ga Division with a convenient weapon they could use to destool him or undermine his authority. For example, when the 1925 Constitution provided for the creation of a Provincial Council of Head Chiefs, the Ga Mantse, along with the Congress officials, refused to attend its meetings. The Mantsemei of Gbese, Asere, Sempe and Akumaji (four of the seven subdivisions of Accra) protested against the boycott of the Provincial Council, charging that the Ga Mantsê had not consulted the Ga people, and that he had boycotted the Provincial Council 'as the result of a meeting between him and the intelligentsia'.¹²⁹ The purpose of this attack on the Ga Mantsê, however, was not to demonstrate support for the new Constitution, but to attempt to undermine the authority of the Ga Mantsê. The sub-chiefs who made the protest had grievances against him in the past, when he supported Government policies inimical to the interests of the sub-chiefs; at that time they had tried unsuccessfully to get the administration to

128. G.N.A. No. 622/69/21, 1/6/21 and No. 521/21, 27/4/21. The Ga Mantsê to Hon. Nana Ofori Atta, C.B.E., No. 36/318/21, 6/5/21. Minutes to S.N.A. Case No. 1/12, para. 6, ADM. 11/1427.

129. G.N.A. M.P. 1344/26, para. 48, SNA. 925. Case No. 28/1925: "Reconstituted Legislative Council."

recognise them if they destooled the Ga Mantse. Now that the Ga Mantse was supporting the Congress, his opponents seized the opportunity to embarrass him; but as one official put it:

...this time he (i.e. the Ga Mantse) has not supported the Government in a matter in which they are really very little interested one way or the other. Any stick is good enough to beat him with ... their attitude must be considerably discounted as being rather anti-Ga Mantse than pro-Constitution.¹³⁰

From 1920 the Gold Coast Section had steadily campaigned to secure the adherence of the Chiefs to the aims of the Congress. There were some members who thought that the chiefs could give their support to the Congress while not becoming actual members; others thought that the Congress would speak with greater authority if the natural rulers became members. The Rev. Mark C. Hayford of the Accra Section, who supported the latter view regretted 'the misunderstanding of the position with reference to the suggestion that the Amanhin and Natural Rulers should formally be or be invited to become members of the Congress'. It was one thing being a supporter of the Congress (as most of the natural rulers were) he said, and quite another to become a member. The Cliffordian argument that the Congress did not represent 'the people' would still be used against the Congress if the natural rulers remained mere sympathisers. The Rev. Hayford thought that 'the matter would stand upon a different basis and would have the weight it was held not to have on the last occasion,' if the natural rulers, who were also influential in the A.R.P.S., were asked to become

130. Ibid.

members of the Congress.¹³¹ He then went on to compare the Congress, rather inaccurately, with the Indian National Congress, asserting that in the latter case, the Indian princes had given active support to the Indian National Congress. He concluded by advising that unless his suggestion was put into effect, they might as well cancel the 1923 Freetown Session of Congress. Whether his proposal was put into practice is not known; what is known is that by 1922 the majority of Chiefs had declared for the Congress and that the Congress had succeeded in installing itself within the traditional apparatus of the A.R.P.S. So strong had the Gold Coast Section become in 1922 that at the A.R.P.S. meeting of June-July, 1922 the remnant of the old guard were unceremoniously removed from their executive positions. The declaration of the Natural Rulers after the conference read:

... We the undersigned Natural Rulers ... do hereby in writing confirm ... the removal by us of the said Joseph Edward Biney and those holding office under him from their offices in our said Society ... and the appointment in their stead of Henry Van Hein Esquire as President, Joseph William de Graft Johnson Esquire and William Ward Brew Esquire ... as Vice Presidents ...

J.E. Biney, E.J.P. Brown and others were accused of betraying 'the confidence reposed in them by their election and installation as officers of our said Society by entering ... into a secret correspondence with Nana Ofori Atta, Omanhin of Akyem Abuakwa directed against the National Congress of British West Africa for which action they were publicly blamed by the Conference of Natural

131. Mark C. Hayford to Henry Van Hein, 22/6/1922. A.R.P.S. Papers, Cape Coast, 109/65, File No. 22. Van Hein was both President of the A.R.P.S. and a leading official of the Gold Coast Section of the N.C.B.W.A.

Rulers which sat at Cape Coast in July and August One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-Two ...¹³² They were accused of submitting a scheme for elective representation to the Government without the knowledge of the Natural Rulers and of 'grossly insubordinate and disrespectful' behaviour towards the Natural Rulers because they had failed to appear before them when commanded to do so.

Earlier in 1921, the group of J.E. Biney and E.J.P. Brown had been fined 'the sum of one Benda and a quantity of drinkables to pacify the party of the said contending members which had been wronged to wit the party belonging to the said National Congress of British West Africa'. Because they disagreed with the ruling of the Natural Rulers they were fined one ox, 'which said penalty, as a result of a prayer for pardon made by Nana Mbra the Third himself at the protracted suit of the said Joseph Edward Biney and those holding office under him, supported by certain of our elderly ladies whose hearts were touched by the pathetic plight in which the said Joseph Edward Biney and his party had placed themselves, was subsequently transmitted into a fine of the sum of Two Bendas and One Sua ...'¹³³

By the middle of 1922, then, the strategic decision-making centre of the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. had been captured by the Gold Coast Section; from then on, few voices were raised in criticism of the Congress: the administration had no choice but to accept

132. Deed of Confirmation and Ratification by the Natural Rulers in Conference Assembled at Cape Coast This 30TH Day of June, 1922 by W. Essuman-Gwira Sekyi, p. 4.

133. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

its de facto assumption of power within the A.R.P.S.; the powerful critics within the A.R.P.S. had been discredited. It is doubtful, however, whether the Gold Coast Section fully succeeded in converting the A.R.P.S. into an effective base from which the whole Congress movement could be directed. There is evidence that the relationship between the Gold Coast Section and the A.R.P.S. was still one in which the former continued to accept the traditional authority of the latter, even though some of its leading members were now officials of the A.R.P.S. W.E.G. Sekyi, for example, was both a nationalist intellectual and a traditionalist. The Gold Coast Section still had to obtain the sanction of the A.R.P.S. on several matters, notably financial, relating to the Congress.¹³⁴ This relative lack of serious friction may have been due, as Miss Denzer rightly argues, to the fact that the social basis of the Congress leadership was extremely limited. Members possessed 'similar education, status, success, and in one way or another, were related to each other. Thus, it appears that there was a tendency for the National Congress meeting to disrupt if there were any personal quarrels among the delegates as well as the possibility that views on reforms and nationalism would largely be the same.'¹³⁵ In general, Congress members showed a high level of education, occupational success, high status both in traditional society and

134. A.R.P.S. papers, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Secretary of the A.R.P.S. to Ohene Kwesie Agyiman, 4/1/23. This correspondence relates to authorisation by the A.R.P.S. for the Gold Coast Section to collect funds and approach the Natural Rulers for the expenses and passage of the Gold Coast delegates to the 1923 Freetown Session. Also T. Hutton-Mills, President of the N.C.B.W.A., to S.R. Wood, Secretary of the N.C.B.W.A., 10/1/23, *ibid.*

135. La Ray Denzer, *op.cit.*, p.18.

in their occupational group, a high occurrence of family, educational, and occupational inter-relationships, and personal histories of nationalist activities. In the majority of cases, they received their higher education either in Freetown or in London.¹³⁶ As we have observed in the other territorial Congress committees, lawyers and merchants who were usually wealthy in nearly all cases formed the leadership of the movement. Wealth and position were prime determinants in participating actively in the movement and holding office.¹³⁷ For example, S.O. Akiwumi, who donated a large sum to the inaugural Congress fund in 1920, is said to have been a wealthy merchant who had sent his twelve children to England. S.O. Akiwumi - described by Macmillan as a successful cocoa trader 'whose extensive knowledge and experience of the cocoa trade of the Gold Coast goes back to the inception of the industry there in 1891'. His cocoa business was concentrated mainly in the Mangoase and Parko districts, and he was 'exceedingly fastidious in obtaining only the best quality, which, under the designation of "S.A.O." quality - the letters being his own initials - he exports to Europe.'¹³⁸ We are also told that Akiwumi 'occupies a leading position amongst the native merchants of the Gold Coast, and is connected, on his mother's side, with the Royal Family of Lagos, at which town he was born in 1858'. His father also belonged to the Lagos nobility and was a chief of Abeokuta.¹³⁹ Educated at the Wesleyan High School in Lagos;

136. Ibid., p. 13.

137. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

138. A. MacMillan, op.cit., p. 208.

139. Ibid.

started business at Accra in 1887 as a general merchant; in 1912 he turned from import trade to produce trade. He was chairman of the Accra Native Club (where the 1920 Accra Conference met) in 1917 and 1918 in succession to Sir Hugh Clifford the Governor. The Club's tennis courts were constructed at Akiwumi's expense as a gift to the Club. In 1918 he was one of the Vice-Presidents of Lady Clifford's Red Cross League and donated £150 to it. Two of his four sons studied law and civil engineering in England; four of his daughters were at the Girls' High School at Taunton, Somerset; the rest received their education. At the Accra Conference in March 1920 the Gold Coast Section alone contributed £10,345 to the Inaugural Fund, while T. Hutton-Mills another merchant and barrister who later became the President of the N.C.B.W.A. contributed 1,000 guineas to the fund.¹⁴⁰ There

140. Von Diedrich Westermann: "Ein Kongress Der Westafrikaner", Kolonial Rundschau, 1920, p. 166. R.E. Dennett: The West African Congress and Government on Native Lines (The African World, 1920), p. 5. T. Hutton Mills - was born at Jamestown, Accra, in 1865; his father was connected with the Stool of Jamestown, and his mother was the second daughter of the Hon. James Bannerman, Lieutenant-General of the Gold Coast Settlement in 1850. Hutton-Mills was educated in the Gold Coast, then at the Wesleyan High School in Freetown. Between 1881 and 1890 he served in the Gold Coast as commercial clerk, and as clerk to certain solicitors in the Colony. In 1891 he went to England; was called to the Bar (Inner Temple) in June 1894. He practised in Accra and Calabar and was an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council until 1918. Hutton-Mills was also interested in education and missionary work, and served for many years as a Member of the Board of Education and Chairman of the Government School Exhibitions. He was also for five years the People's Warden at Holy Trinity Church and later became Chancellor of the Diocese of the Anglican Church in the Colony. It is said that during his student days in England he was presented by W.E. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, with a book on the Irish Home Rule question. Four of his sons were educated at Oxford and Cambridge, and in various Inns of Court. His daughter, Violet, studied at the Dames School, Preston Park,

[Contd.]

is also evidence to show that T. Hutton-Mills financed the London Congress Delegation of 1920-21 throughout its stay in England, and even paid the passages of some of the delegates, being reimbursed (only partially) by collections from the territorial committees. He had spent £1,500 on that occasion. In 1923, he flatly refused to finance the passage and accommodation of the Gold Coast delegates to the Freetown Session of the N.C.B.W.A., telling S.R. Wood that

If the Congress aims would result in beneficial reforms and changes in the Crown Colony system in West Africa and the Gold Coast in particular, our Chiefs and peoples should contribute towards the inevitable expenses which have been thrown on me by my appointment as President of the Congress...

Further, may I ask what committee will provide funds for the expenses of the Gold Coast Delegates to and from Sierra Leone and their stay there because I am up to date out-of-pocket of over one thousand five hundred pounds (£1500.0.0) for my detention and works in London during the period of nearly six months detention there in 1920.¹⁴¹

Finally, H. Van-Hein, Treasurer to the London Committee in 1920, also heavily financed the delegation during its stay, particularly when funds were not forthcoming from the territorial committees in West Africa. When Van-Hein died at Cape Coast in July 1928, he left property to the amount of £19,628. 6. 6; this included a stock of £6,774. 18. 8.¹⁴²

140. Contd.] Brighton and at the London College of Music. He also financed the education of a nephew at St. Peter's College, Cambridge and at King's College Hospital, London. (Macmillan, pp. 224-225.)

141. T. Hutton-Mills, President of the National Congress of British West Africa to S.R. Wood, Secretary of the National Congress of British West Africa, 10/1/23. A.R.P.S. Papers, Cape Coast Regional Archives.

142. Cape Coast Regional Archives, Acc. No. 585/64: Documents Belonging to Henry Van Hein Esq. The financial aspects of the N.C.B.W.A. are discussed neither by D. Kimble nor by Miss Denzer.

Paradoxically, the Gold Coast, which was the spearhead of the Congress movement, and which was most articulate in its demand for elective representation, was the last (excluding the Gambia) to be granted limited elective representation. It is to the credit of the Gold Coast leadership of the Congress movement that it continued to stimulate interest in the movement even when its political goals were not immediately realised. The political history of the inter-war years will certainly go down in history not only as a brilliant chapter in the history of modern Ghana but also in the history of English-speaking West Africa as a whole and in the history of the early pan-African movement. The Accra Conference of 1920 can rightly be seen as a worthy forerunner of the momentous 1958 Accra All-Africa People's Conference.

THE NIGERIAN SECTION OF THE N.C.B.W.A.

Eleven years ago, Ruth Perry drew attention to the importance of studying the contents of Nigerian newspapers and political pamphlets as a source of information on colonial politics and nationalist movements in the inter-war period. She observed that 'the newspapers which comprised this African press have in very few cases been studied or quoted by historians'.¹⁴³ She also observed that 'The history of Nigerian participation in the National Congress of British West Africa, which has briefly been upon and dismissed as unimportant by most writers on the period,

143. Ruth Perry: "New Sources for Research in Nigerian History". Africa, vol. XXV, 1955, pp. 430-432. An analysis of the contents of Nigerian newspapers, however, was made in 1951 by W.D. Edmonds, op.cit.

takes on a new colour when the newspaper files of 1921 are studied, and it is an interesting speculation as to how much influence they exerted on Governor Clifford's reversal of his opinion between December 1920, when he condemned severely the request for an elected Legislative Council, and November 1922, when Nigeria became the first territory in British Africa to have such a Legislative Council'.¹⁴⁴ While it is agreed that the Nigerian section of the N.C.B.W.A. was the weakest of the local branches, scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the causes of this weakness nor, with a few exceptions,¹⁴⁵ have they given any account of the political activities of some of the personalities involved in the politics of the local committee, and the relation of the local committee with other sections of opinion in Lagos politics in the 1920's. Names which immediately come to mind are Dr. Akiwande Savage who, with J.E. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast conceived the idea of a pan-West African movement in 1913; 'Professor' Adeoye Deniga, the Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell, E.M.E. Agbebi, J. Egerton Shyngle, and J.C. Zizer, lawyer, nationalist and proprietor of The West African Nationhood.

The origins of the Congress idea in Nigeria, according to Ruth Perry, date as far back as 1904 when the Lagos Standard 'suggested a conference of West African natives to bring forth native opinions on questions affecting the social, political and religious conditions in West Africa, and a wider and more accurate

144. Ruth Perry, *opcit.*, pp. 430-431.

145. T.N. Tamuno: Nigeria and Elective Representation, 1923-1947 (Heinemann, 1966); J.S. Coleman: Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkely, 1958).

study of native customs and institutions'.¹⁴⁶ Other accounts, however, put the date between 1915 and 1917. When asked by the President of Lagos Colony, Henry Carr, to give the Governor a brief account of the 'origin and functions of the organisations at work in Nigeria in connexion with the National Congress of British West Africa', and to describe its membership and its methods of election,¹⁴⁷ Savage in reply stated that in early 1917 or towards the end of 1916, a number of gentlemen met at the house of a Mr. David Taylor at Breadfruit Street, Lagos 'to discuss the advisability of reviving the idea of founding a British West African Conference', an idea which had been discussed for some years in the West African newspapers and had been suggested by J.E. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast and Dr. Savage sometime in 1914 in a circular letter addressed to local leaders in the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Lagos.¹⁴⁸ Savage himself was not certain about the exact year in which the Congress (or Conference) idea was conceived. In another context, in which he was refuting the argument of the Nigerian Pioneer of 11/6/1920 that Dr. Randle first broached the subject of a West African Conference, he outlined its origins thus:

In 1912 or the early part of 1913, the Gold Coast Leader (with the Editorial Staff of which I was then connected) began to publish articles on the necessity of a West African

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146. Ruth Perry: A Preliminary Bibliography of the Literature of Nationalism in Nigeria (1956), p. 5.
147. Henry Carr to Akiwande Savage, Times of Nigeria, 28/3/1920.
148. Savage to Carr, Times of Nigeria, 24/9/1920 and 28/3/1921; also A.R.P.S. File No. 92, 179/65, Casely Hayford and Akiwande Savage to the Secretary, Gold Coast A.R.P.S., Hamilton Hall, Cape Coast, 26/5/1915. Cape Coast Regional Archives.

conference being constituted.¹⁴⁹ The idea was warmly taken up by the Lagos Press and the Sierra Leone Press; and the entire West African Press agitated the question for many months. In the early part of 1914 Mr. Casely Hayford and myself sent from Secondee circular letters to leading men in Lagos, Sierra Leone and other parts of the Gold Coast inviting opinions on the subject and suggesting that the time had come for leading men to meet in conference and have a West African Congress instituted. Dr. Randle was among those in Lagos we wrote to and was one of those who replied to our letter ... And it is astonishing that Dr. Randle should now be attempting to use this courteous acknowledgement of his views and suggestions as a basis for advancing his claims to the paternity of the West African Conference movement.¹⁵⁰

Casely Hayford and Dr. Savage postponed the scheme at the outbreak of the Great War, and the latter returned to Nigeria in 1915; a few months later he called a meeting in Lagos to discuss the project.¹⁵¹ Those present at the meeting were Dr. Randle, Dr. Lumpkin, Dr. O. Obassa of Ikeja, J. Egerton Shyngle, J.H. Doherty, B.C. Vaughan, David Taylor and T.H. Jackson.¹⁵² The meeting then decided to appoint a committee to sort out the matter and appointed Dr. Randle as its chairman, with Thomas H. Jackson of The Lagos Weekly Record and Dr. Savage as joint secretaries.¹⁵³ They then corresponded with similar ad hoc committees in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast on the organisation of the projected conference. Meanwhile there had been some disagreement between Dr. Randle and Dr. Savage on the organisation of the Lagos Conference

149. See The Gold Coast Leader, 7/9/1912 and 11/1/1913; Dr. Savage was then practising in the Gold Coast; Casely Hayford took over the Leader after the former left for Lagos in 1915.

150. Dr. Akiwande Savage to the Editor of The Lagos Weekly Record, 26/6/1920.

151. The Lagos Weekly Record, 26/6/1920, p. 6.

152. The Times of Nigeria, 28/3/1921, p. 6.

153. Ibid.; The Lagos Weekly Record, 26/6/1920, p. 6.

Committee, but there were no resignations. On January 24th, 1919 the committee met at the Glover Memorial Hall, and with some additional members, formed itself into a Provisional Committee of the West African Conference, Lagos branch. Again, Dr. Randle was appointed chairman of the new committee, Dr. Savage its secretary, and the Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell and 'Professor' Deniga as propagandists to popularize the Conference movement.¹⁵⁴ They issued leaflets in English and Yoruba explaining the objects of the Conference and urging the necessity of forming a Lagos branch; public meetings were also advertised in Lagos. On March 28th, 1919 another meeting was held at Ilupes Hall in which the Provisional Committee resolved itself into the Lagos Committee of the West African Conference. Officers of the new committee were:- Dr. Randle (chairman), the Hon. S.H. Pearce (vice-chairman), Dr. Savage (honorary secretary), Patriarch J.G. Campbell and Karimu Kotun (honorary assistant secretaries) and Dr. O. Obasa (treasurer). Further disagreement between Dr. Savage and Dr. Randle, however, led to the resignation of the latter, who started a small opposition group among the 'conservatives' of Lagos.¹⁵⁵ The committee canvassed in various towns in the Provinces, and local committees were formed in Calabar, Ibadan and Ebute-Meta in the usual procedure - at public meetings.

On the instruction of the Lagos Committee, Deniga delivered a public lecture early in 1919 in Lagos. The lecture was later published and distributed and was on the Necessity for a British

154. The Times of Nigeria, op.cit.

155. The Lagos Weekly Record, op.cit.

West African Conference. Deniga lightheartedly began the lecture with a parody of John Milton:

What in me is dark, illumine;
 What is low, raise and support;
 That in the course of this great subject,
 I may invoke the aid of Eternal Providence.
 And justify the necessity there is
 For the existence of a West African Conference
 (With Apology to Milton).

Deniga added that the Conference idea could be traced 'as far back as the year 1913 or thereabouts', and that the newspapers which advocated the idea were The Sierra Leone Weekly News, The Gold Coast Leader, The Nigerian Chronicle and The Lagos Standard.¹⁵⁶

As in the other territorial committees of the N.C.B.W.A., the small, articulate Lagos committee found itself flanked by an influential, conservative anti-Congress group largely composed of persons whose social status was high, and the vast army of 'don't knows'. The Nigerian Pioneer, whose interests were generally more closely identified with those of the administration, accused Dr. Savage of undemocratic practices and of bringing personal disputes into Congress affairs. It charged that no minutes of branch meetings were kept, that the organisation of the Lagos branch was deplorable, that order during meetings was 'better asserted than observed' and that 'the assumption of autocratic imperiousness made the meetings a perfect nuisance'.¹⁵⁷ The Nigerian Pioneer, however, was if not a pro-Government paper, generally hostile to the new 'politics'; hence it claimed on

156. A. Deniga: Necessity for a British West African Conference (Lagos 1919, Jehova-Shalom Printing Press), pp. 1-2. Copy sent by Deniga to K. Sekyi - Sekyi Papers 313/1964, Cape Coast Regional Archives.

157. The Nigerian Pioneer, 20/8/1920, p. 6.

another occasion that 'as far as Nigeria is concerned only a few hundred people have heard of the Conference, of its self-elected delegates or of its intention to send super-delegates to London with a list of grievances they have never submitted or heard anything about'.¹⁵⁸ The Times of Nigeria scarcely paid attention to the proposals to hold a West African Conference, though in March 1920, when the Conference met at Accra, it devoted an editorial to it, for the most part a criticism of the Lagos Conference Committee, describing the only meeting held in Lagos by the Committee as 'this solitary meeting of physicians and a few members of the community', and criticising it for failing to publicize the objects of the Conference. The rest of the editorial was the usual attack on the Europeanised African and his shortcomings.

The Accra Conference, however, seems to have rekindled interest in the affairs of the Lagos committee, which was now renamed the Nigerian Central Committee of the Congress of Africans of British West Africa. The timely publication of Casely Hayford's United West Africa moved the Times of Nigeria to declare:

It is time that we should rise above that mean spirit which thinks that because we have different political opinions therefore we must become sworn enemies to each other and seek each other's ruin Unity must be the watchword and patriotism the principle We must strive for a United West Africa¹⁵⁹

Disunity, however, continued to plague the efforts of the Lagos branch, so that it found it difficult to collect sufficient funds to maintain its delegates, Chief Oluwa and J. Egerton Shyngle, in

158. Ibid., 27/8/1920.

159. The Times of Nigeria, 17/5/1920, p. 4.

London.¹⁶⁰ Unlike Sierra Leone, where there was greater consensus among the social elite on the object and organisation of the local Congress branch, and the Gold Coast where under the leadership of Casely Hayford, Hutton-Mills, the Rev. O. Pinanko, W.E.G. Sekyi, the Ga Mantse and a part of the A.R.P.S., the Congressmen were able to muster sufficient financial support and the support of other influential traditional rulers to overcome the opposition of 'conservatives' on the A.R.P.S. executive committee, the Lagos branch was rendered less effective partly because of the overwhelming public opposition of Sir Hugh Clifford, partly because the chiefs (with the exception of Chief Oluwa and Chief Essien Offiong Essien) had little or no opinion on the movement (as their interests were not threatened by its existence), and partly because of pre-occupation with the affairs of the House of Docemo. Although the long-term interests of the influential groups in Lagos were compatible with colonial rule to the extent that such a relationship meant the consolidation and possible extension of their privileges and social status, the opposition of influential conservatives led by Sir Kitoyi Ajasa's Nigerian Pioneer must not be overlooked. The Nigerian Pioneer not only opposed the Congress movement on procedural and technical points but firmly identified itself with current government opinion on the subject of elective representation. Its views were largely shared by the professional or 'learned' classes.¹⁶¹ It was, according to

160. Macaulay Papers IV, 11, pp. 74-75: A Savage to H.C. Bankole-Bright, 30/10/1920; Bright to Savage, 23/11/1920, *ibid*.

161. Increase Coker: Seventy Years of the Nigerian Press (Daily Times Publication, 1952), pp. 14-17.

Ernest S. Ikoli, 'the first really Nigerian national', owned and edited by Sir Kitoyi Ajasa, a prominent lawyer, a 'conservative and a man of very strong character... who in his day exercised considerable influence on the public life of the country'. It was generally believed that the Pioneer was inspired by Sir Frederick Lugard, a friend of Ajasa, and even subsidised by the Government. The paper, however, was widely read, though circulation does not seem to have exceeded 1,500.¹⁶²

In addition to this opposition, the Cliffordian reforms of late 1922 largely removed the raison d'etre of the Lagos committee. Also, the victory of Herbert Macaulay's Nigerian National Democratic Party in the 1923 elections meant concentration on local politics as a result of the scope provided by elective councils, rather than concentration on the aims and objects of a not too well organised interterritorial political association. Point XVI of the constitution of the N.N.D.P. merely pledged 'To recognise the status of the National Congress of British West Africa and work hand in hand in co-operation with that body to support the entire schemes and proposals of the National Congress of British West Africa as expressed in its Memoranda and to endorse the various Resolutions

162. Ernest Ikoli: "The Nigerian Press", The West African Review June 1950, pp. 625-627. 'The Nigerian Pioneer was not so much pro-Government as conservative which term, in the eyes of its enemies, was synonymous with treachery '... it was almost the only newspaper which might be called pro-Government. Of all the newspapers studied, the Nigerian Pioneer was, by far, the most conservative. At times it actually criticised the Government for adopting a too progressive and advanced policy.' Sometimes its opponents called it 'pro-Government', 'Lugardian', 'anti-progressive', 'Uncle Tom', 'lick spittle', etc. W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., pp. 11-12, 85 below.

passed and confirmed in the First and Second Sessions of that Congress'.¹⁶³

But the N.C.B.W.A., as J.C. Zizer argued, was not interested in party politics:

.... the National Congress of British West Africa transcends the narrow limits of Party Politics. It aspires to the greater and more envious pretention of Nationhood.¹⁶⁴

Herbert Macaulay however, in spite of Coleman's assertion that he played a 'prominent role behind the scenes in the National Congress of British West Africa',¹⁶⁵ was more concerned with Lagos, the Eleko and the Legislative Council, now that the Cliffordian reforms had given him further opportunity.¹⁶⁶

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163. Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Nigerian National Democratic Party. Macaulay MSS. No.1, vol. IV, p. 15.
164. The West African Nationhood, 10/7/1931, p. 4; 10/12/30, p. 3.
165. J.S. Coleman: Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkely, 1958), p. 456, footnote 48. There is no evidence to show that Coleman's assertion is correct; it is highly unlikely that Macaulay influenced decisions taken at Axim; what the Macaulay Papers show is that he was kept well informed about the movement between 1919 and 1921.
166. T.N. Tamuno, op.cit., pp. 41, 45-46. Maurice Duverger: 'The emergence of local electoral committees is directly linked with the extension of popular suffrage... Sometimes it is the candidate himself who gathers around him a few faithful friends in order to ensure his election.... on the other hand, a few men form a group to launch a candidate and help him in his campaign Very often some previously existing society or newspapers bring about the creation of electoral committees.' Political Parties, Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State (London, 1954), pp. xxvii-xxviii. Eric Voegelin refers to such parties as Macaulay's N.N.D.P. as belonging to 'the elemental class like the elemental type concept of representative institutions' - The New Science of Politics (Chicago, 1962), p. 36. Hannah Arendt, in discussing the tendency of pan-movements to decry 'politics' observes: 'The decisive invention of the pan-movements ... was not that they too claimed to be outside and above the party system, but that they called themselves "movements" The slogan "above the parties", the appeal to "men of all parties", and the boast that they would "stand far removed from the strife of parties
- [Contd.]

Attempts to revive the Nigerian section of the N.C.B.W.A. led to the co-operation of the Lagos and Ebute-Metta branches in 1925 to plan the re-organisation of their branches, and at a meeting on December 15th, 1925, it was agreed that there was need for a revivifying visit to be paid to Nigeria by delegates from the Gold Coast or Sierra Leone. New officers were elected - E.M.E. Agbebi (chairman), S.H.A. Baptist (treasurer), A Latunde Johnson and E.A. Franklin (joint secretaries) - most of them lawyers.¹⁶⁷ An earlier editorial in West Africa thought that lack of interest in Nigeria was due to the fact that 'Nigeria understands the ideals of the movement, but her educated men appear to find the "applied" science of government more interesting than the "pure" variety, and prefer to recognise that the term "African racial aspirations" is a portmanteau phrase, including a range of ideals extending from representative self-government on the one hand to a simple desire to be freed from European domination to carry out more primitive customs on the other. When Nigeria has attained to a more homogeneous structure it will be time for her to consider interesting herself in ideals which the experience of Lagos has proved are not yet practicable.¹⁶⁸ The Sierra Leone Weekly News was more severe in its criticism of the Nigerian Section of the Congress movement; after commenting on the lack of tact displayed by the Gambia Section during the 1925-1926

166.Contd.] and represent only a National purpose" was a general characteristic of pan-movements in Europe. The Origins of Totalitarianism (George Allen and Unwin, 1958), pp. 250-251.

167. West Africa, 31/1/25, p. 55.

168. Ibid., 11/10/24, p. 1083: "Nigeria and the National Congress".

Session held in Bathurst, the editorial observed that it was 'distressingly humiliating' for the Lagos Branch to be unable to send delegates to the Bathurst Session. It continued:

To think of the number of worthy citizens of Nigeria who could answer most satisfactorily to the call of the Congress for service....., and yet to appreciate that up to the present it has not been possible for such distinguished and worthy representatives of the race to answer the roll call in connection with the Congress Movement, is to come face to face with one of the stern realities, however our pretensions may be, that mark us Africans still at a frightful discount towards those essentials that make for true nationhood, the right of self-determination and the possession of those qualities entitling the African to take his place amongst the leaders of thought and progress. Our co-patriots in Nigeria have allowed themselves to be the victims of the force of disintegration....., they have proved themselves easy dupes to false patronage and the offer of the invidious sop,¹⁶⁹ responsible for the policy of easy domination, popularly known as 'divide and rule.'¹⁷⁰

The N.N.D.P., however, came to the rescue of the Nigerian committee when in 1930 it helped to organise the Fourth Session of the N.C.B.W.A. in Lagos. In 1931 the Lagos Committee made a feeble attempt to secure extension of the limited franchise granted in 1923. Between 1930 and 1932 the Lagos committee was fortunate to have J.C. Zizer as its secretary, the Rev. W.B. Euba (president) and Magnus Macaulay and E.M.E. Agbebi as vice-presidents. Zizer's The West African Nationhood was certainly a great asset to the struggling Lagos N.C.B.W.A. committee. His paper pledged itself to 'support the British Constitution' and 'render some little service in shaping the destiny of the Negro on the West Coast of Africa.'¹⁷¹ It carried articles on the Negro question in America

169. This 'sop' may be a reference to Sir Hugh Clifford's Machiavellian conception of the reforms he introduced in 1922.

170. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 20/3/1926.

171. The West African Nationhood, 18/10/30, p. 2.

and Britain, as well as on 'The Negro Voice And Activities The World Over', including extracts from J.A. Roger's The Negro in European History. The paper generally complained of the worsening economic situation in West Africa, particularly unemployment and bad trade:

Business or the specific engagement in commerce to-day is admitted by all who know its internal workings to be unprofitable owing to the very bad and stagnant condition of every trade. Judging from daily observation it appears to afford, especially to the average African businessman, little pleasure, profit, or ease, but an abundance of discomfort, loss and disappointment.¹⁷²

The demand for cocoa had also sharply decreased, the Zizer lectured from the editorial pulpit:

We mention these facts for the consideration of our African producers; for it seems, being out of touch with the theory of Demand and Supply, they keep on producing commodities for which the world does not now make as much demand as in previous years....¹⁷³

On November 29th, 1930, The West African Nationhood carried a lengthy article by its proprietor, Zizer, on "The National Congress of British West Africa: The Greatest Political Organisation on the West Coast - The West African Negro Must Rally Round its Banner". After a long introduction in which Zizer tried to show that the African had 'a definite and exclusive history of his own', he finally got down to define the N.C.B.W.A. as 'the only powerful organisation on the West Coast of Africa which aims at unification and consolidation of Negro ideas, aspirations and demands a burning flame in the political history of the West Coast of Africa'. His views, however, are not as radical as they sound, as is seen

172. Ibid., 29/10/30.

173. Ibid.

from his condemnation of 'party politics', his references to 'the hampering tactics of Bolshevism', his fondness for constitutionalism (he was a lawyer), and his view that the Congress was concerned with securing jobs occupied by Europeans for Africans.¹⁷⁴ Writing at a time when the N.C.B.W.A. itself had reached its nadir, it is not surprising that Zizer's attack was directly mainly against 'that band of Negro calumniators within and without the borders of Congress who ... would wreck the Congress; first because they do not man the reins of its destiny, and just because they would not follow leadership'. In 1933, however, he stopped activity, and with his departure the Lagos section ceased functioning. As in the Gold Coast unsuccessful efforts were made to revive it after 1945.¹⁷⁵

The social, occupational and economic status of the majority of members of the Lagos committee of the N.C.B.W.A., as well as some of their personal histories, was almost identical to that of the other territorial committees. To take a random sample of Nigerians connected with the Lagos Committee: Prince Bassey Duke Ephraim of Calabar who accompanied the Nigerian delegation to the Accra Conference in 1920, was born in 1878, the son of King Duke of Calabar; he continued his education in England in 1887 at Seaforth High School and at Waterlow College, near Liverpool. He returned to Calabar in 1892 and worked with the Niger Coast Protectorate under the Consul-Generalship of Sir Claude Macdonald. He resigned in 1894 and started business as a trader. From 1903 he was a

174. Ibid., 29/11/30, pp. 1-3.

175. J.S. Coleman, op.cit., p. 195.

member of the Native Court of Calabar, being elected its President in October 1914. It is interesting to note that in 1913 Prince Bassey Duke Ephraim was elected by the Calabar community as its representative in the dispute over the Calabar land tenure question; he went to England in 1913 and presented Mr. Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, a petition on behalf of the Calabar community.¹⁷⁶ Unlike the majority of Nigerian chiefs and traditional rulers, his education and early activity in protest movements were important factors in his association with the N.C.B.W.A.

Karimu Kotun, whom Dr. Savage refers to as one of his early collaborators in the creation of the Lagos committee is described by Allister Macmillan as 'a resident commercial traveller', specialising in cotton goods, and as a self-confident and able business man. He was born in Lagos in 1881 and started business activity after he left school in 1896. In 1910 he became sole agent for E.H. Stein and Co. of Liverpool, but as the firm closed its business at the opening of the War, it recommended him to S.L. Behrens (Manchester) Ltd., whom he represented in Lagos until the end of 1919 when, because of shipping difficulties, he started business on his own. Socially too, Karimu Kotun was successful. In 1907 he was appointed President of the first Mohammedan Cricket Club in Lagos; in 1913 he became Managing Director of the Alowolagba Society, and in 1919 was appointed by the Lagos community,

176. A. Macmillan, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

in succession to Adolphus B. Martins, as Private Secretary to Prince Eshngbayi Eleko,¹⁷⁷ and no doubt became involved in the politics of the Eleko case.

The Hon. Samuel Herbert Pearce, F.R.G.S., was what in some quarters, is called a 'self-made man'. After leaving the C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos, he became apprenticed to W.B. MacIver and Co. Ltd.; 'Mr. Pearce had the good fortune to be under the direct supervision of a Mr. Carr, a strict disciplinarian, a fastidious and punctilious exponent of the best way of doing things, and withal a Scotsman of great business ability, under whose able training the young Nigerian lad acquired in course of time a knowledge of general merchandise and commercial law and practice probably equal in every respect to that of his discerning teacher¹⁷⁸ Pearce worked with this firm for five years before forming his own, Pearce and Thompson Ltd. This business, however, was wound up in 1894 as a result of the local wars in Nigeria. Between 1894 and 1906, Pearce did advisory work on the Soto Rubber Plantations and was local agent for the African and Gold Coast Trade Corporation.

In 1907 he had his break; he went to Calabar and started an ivory trade business there 'with such phenomenal success that six years later he had amassed a large fortune and returned in affluence

177. Ibid., p. 113.

178. Ibid., p. 97.

to Lagos' where he continued as a produce merchant.¹⁷⁹ Again, it is worth noting that Pearce too had a history of nationalistic activity. In 1913 he led the Nigerian Land Deputation to London under the auspices of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Society; 'he has long been a prominent and capable leader in political, religious, and social circles of the colony, and is a member of the Legislative Council, Town Council' Pearce was also made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1915, and a Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute; and, of course, he was a member of the Lagos Racecourse Board of Management.

Another member of the Lagos committee, J.H. Doherty, is described as 'one of the most successful of the native merchants' in Lagos; he started import business in 1899 in Alakoro, gradually extending his stores to Oshogbo, Zaria, Lokoja and Kano. One of his sons studied law in England, the other studied at Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone.¹⁸⁰

David Taylor, at whose house Dr. Akiwande Savage discussed the formation of the Lagos committee with other leading Lagosians in 1915, like S.H. Pearce had his commercial experience with W.B. MacIver and Co. Ltd.; he started his own business in 1891 at Balogun Street, 'where he did so well that in 1894 he opened an excellent general merchandise store on the Marina. By 1916 he had succeeded to such an extent that he leased the last

179. Ibid., p. 98. Pearce represented the Egba division in the Legislative Council as a nominated member from 1923 to 1933, and is described as 'one of the most moderate members of the Council': J. Wheare: The Nigerian Council (Faber and Faber, 1949), p. 199, Appendix III and p.123.

180. Ibid., p. 99.

mentioned building to the Colonial Bank¹⁸¹

Then we have the typical black Edwardian T.H. Jackson, outspoken editor of the radical Lagos Weekly Record with its humorous latinisms and lengthy sentences. Jackson, whose father started the paper in 1890, was one of the early officials of the Lagos committee, and his newspaper fully and continuously supported the Congress movement, always lambasting Sir Kitoyi Ajasa's reactionary Nigerian Pioneer. He was educated in Liberia and Freetown, and took to journalism at an early age; by 1905 he had become 'an able and versatile writer and a bold and influential champion of the Negro race'.¹⁸² Here again, a man like Jackson could not fail to take part in nationalist and pan-Negro activities. In 1907 he went to England, not only as a visitor, but as the leader of the deputation to Lord Elgin in connection with the Ijebu timber concessions - 'so well did he accomplish his purpose that the House of Commons decided in favour of the aggrieved natives' Again in 1918 Jackson visited England 'and was largely instrumental in the formation of the African Progress Union, which is rapidly extending in every direction, and of which he is organising Secretary for the world'. And, of course, the black Edwardian could not fail to become a member of the London Chamber of Commerce and the Essex County Cricket Club.¹⁸³ No one reading through the Lagos Weekly Record between 1919 and 1925 will mistake T.H. Jackson for a narrow-minded nationalist.

181. Ibid., p. 108.

182. Ibid., p. 109; also the recent study by Robert W. July, The Origins of Modern African Thought (Faber and Faber, 1968) pp. 358-365.

183. Ibid.

Dr. Richard Akiwande Savage, founder of the Nigerian Congress committee, had participated in 'politics' since his student days. While at Edinburgh University (1897-1905) he was a member of the Students' Representative Council, and a member of the Executive Committee of the same Council from 1898 to 1900. In that period he also served as sub-editor of The Student and as joint editor of the Edinburgh University Handbook and attended the 1900 Pan-African Conference as one of the delegates of the Afro-West Indian Literary Society of Edinburgh. He served as Medical Officer of Health, Cape Coast Castle, from 1907 to 1911, and was also on the editorial staff of The Gold Coast Leader. In 1915 he returned to Lagos where he began work on the formation of the Lagos branch of the N.C.B.W.A.; his insistence on personal leadership and his personality were disliked by the conservative section of Lagos opinion, with the result that the Nigerian committee never became as effective as it might have been; he is described as 'an accomplished litterateur, and makes a hobby of journalism'.¹⁸⁴

J. Egerton Shyngle, like most of the Africans who contributed to the growth of early nationalism in Nigeria, was a non-Nigerian. He was born in Bathurst, Gambia, in 1862 and went to the Wesleyan Boys' High School there, transferring to the C.M.S. Grammar School in Freetown. He went to Fourah Bay College and to Christ Church, Oxford, but never graduated. In 1888 he was called to the Bar as

184. Ibid., p. 136. For Savage in student politics at Edinburgh see STUDENT, vol. XIII, No.1, 20/10/1898, p. 8; vol. XIII, No.3, 3/11/1898, pp. 65, 207; vol. XIII, No.10, 5/1/1899, No. 18, 2/3/1899, p. 405; No. 18, 1/3/1900 etc. Dr. Savage was appointed Assistant Colonial Surgeon in 1901 and was the last African to hold this post in the British West African Medical Service.

a member of the Inner Temple, and settled in Lagos in 1892, rising 'rapidly into fame by virtue of his wonderful forensic abilities and legal acumen'.¹⁸⁵ He and Chief Oluwa represented Nigeria in the N.C.B.W.A. delegation to London in 1920-21; he was also the first elected member for Lagos in the new 1923 Legislative Council, as well as a Town Councillor and a patron of the N.N.D.P. He took great interest in the latter body and in local politics and was a friend of Herbert Macaulay with whom he exchanged friendly letters on various questions. He died in 1926 at the age of sixty-four.¹⁸⁶

Miss Denzer states in her study of the Gold Coast Section that 'several of the Nigerian delegates to the Congress were leaders of the radical nationalist religious splinter groups'.¹⁸⁷ With the exception of the Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell (who attended) and the Rev. Euba (who did not), this statement is incorrect. Only the Rev. Campbell and the Rev. Euba were such leaders; Deniga was more of a journalist and cultural nationalist, although he did in fact write pamphlets on subjects like polygamy and on questions relating to African religious sects.

'Professor' Adeoye Deniga was the author of African Leaders Past and Present¹⁸⁸ as well as the editor of Herald-Alore and author of articles on topics such as Monogamy and the Church, What is Religion? and A Defence of Native Customs Aribiloso (Egba National

185. The Lagos Weekly Record, 27/3/1926, p. 5; obituary on J. Egerton-Shyngle.

186. West Africa, 24/4/1926, vol. X, 1926-27, p. 497. See also L.C. Gwam's article on the Hon. C.A. Sapara-Williams in IBADAN, No. 21, 1965, pp. 36-38 and T.N. Tamuno, op.cit., pp. 45, 80.

187. La Ray Denzer, op.cit., p. 66, footnote 32.

188. African Leaders Past and Present, 2 vols. (Tika-Tore Printing Works, Lagos, 1915).

Poet). African Leaders Past and Present was intended as an account of the lives of some of 'Africa's greatest sons who have played and are still playing their parts towards the rise of the race to which we belong'. The African patriots dealt with included Bishop Crowther, Sir Samuel Lewis, John Mensah Sarbah ('who contributed not a little to the advancement of our race in his own country'), G.W. Johnson ('alias "the Reversible Johnson" admittedly the father of the Egba United Government ...'), J.A.O. Payne, Mohammed Shitta Bey of Lagos, Bishop James Johnson ('Holy Johnson'), the Hon. J.J. Thomas of Sierra Leone, the Hon. C.A. Sapara-Williams, O. Johnson the historian of the Yorubas, and E.W. Blyden, 'a full-blooded negro who did much towards the furtherance of our race'; Deniga added that Blyden had already advocated a West African University, 'thus putting a stop to the waste of life of many of our men who were accustomed to leave for Europe, staying there for years to gain 'More Light' Son's sons shall praise thy name, great Blyden, thou sable champion of a sable race'.¹⁸⁹

The object of Deniga's African Leaders was partly to tell his readers 'that we as Africans, have been making efforts to up-lift the standard of our race an encouragement to us all, further, to rally round the cause and advancement of our dear fatherland',¹⁹⁰ and partly as an attempt at some form of mental decolonisation:

189. Ibid., p. 5, vol. I.

190. Ibid., p. 10, vol. I.

In an age when the syreen voice of pleasure bids fair to entangle all in its mesh, when serious thinking is fast becoming a lost art, when the genius of retrospection, no less than that of circumspection, is indulging in a fitful doze, tending to a heavy slumber, the lecturer thinks that as Africans we have Leaders, Past and Present, the contemplation of whose lives and works cannot but serve to arouse the dormant energies of an age so talented, and consequently so responsible.¹⁹¹

Deniga was born in Lagos in April 1881, the son of Sergeant Olukotun Thomas of the Lagos Police Force, and Lydia Famoluke "a Lady-Ivory and General Merchant of the Lagos of yesterday".¹⁹² He was first educated at the Anglican school of St. Peter's (Lagos) and later at the C.M.S. Grammar School. He entered the civil service as an Express Delivery mail-man in the local Post Office in 1901. In 1902 he returned to his old school, St. Peter's, as a certified teacher, and became assistant master of St. Pauls (Breadfruit) School between 1903 and 1908. He was also headmaster of Wesleyan Tinubu School from 1910 to 1911. In 1908 he changed his name from Gabriel Adeoye Thomas to Adeoye Deniga "mainly because I desire to be known and addressed by my native name".¹⁹³ Between 1913 and 1914 he founded and edited a monthly bilingual magazine called The Herald-Alore; in 1918, he was appointed sub-editor of the fiery Lagos Weekly Record; he was a letter writer by profession.

The Rev. Patriarch James George Campbell was perhaps the greatest publicist in Nigeria of the N.C.B.W.A., and one of the most fearless nationalists of the time. He was born in Lagos on

191. Ibid. Forward, vol. II, 1915.

192. The Times of Nigeria, 7/3/1921, p. 6.

193. Ibid.

May 4th, 1876, the son of Edward Henry Macaulay Campbell and Elizabeth Campbell, both Sierra Leoneans; he claimed, however, that 'my paternal Grandfather is of the Ijesha tribe in the Yoruba Country'.¹⁹⁴ He had been an outspoken critic ever since his early missionary days.¹⁹⁵ Campbell was then posted to Opobo where he was assaulted and injured for clearing human skulls from the Delta Pastorate Church Mission at Opobo; but the Juju-chiefs lost and the Church was established at Opobo, Iboru, Akwete, Ohambele and Asuniri.

In 1899 he resigned from the Delta Pastorate Church and was admitted into the Ministry of the United Native African Church in Lagos, where he worked for four years. Owing to a dispute between him and the U.N.A. Church on the ordination of Rev. J.B.D. Kester, Campbell left the Church in 1903 and founded the West African Episcopal Church, of which he became the Patriarch. His church had branches at Ikorodu, Shagamu, Ogere, Ode Akaka, Ilaje and Ikale districts, as well as in the Gold Coast. In 1919 he became the honorary Presiding Patriarch of the Christ Army Church (Garrick Braid Connection) at Bonny.

The Rev. Patriarch Campbell was also the author of Observation on Some Topics, 1913-1917, During the Administration of Sir Frederick Lugard, a work generally relegated to the footnotes. Here he states quite clearly his belief in what he called 'the British Tradition' and in political evolution as opposed to revolution; yet the book is an anti-colonial tract as well as a criticism of Lagos politics.

194. Ibid.

195. Ibid.

It begins with a condemnation of the atrocities of the Great War, and then goes on to state its effects on Nigeria:

.... Commercially, the prices of European foodstuffs and goods are all trippled. Whilst that of native produce is reduced. The white capitalist raises or reduces the price to suit his own convenience In shipping - the merchant marine suffered heavily and every one in Lagos felt the pinch. In politics - the administration continues to pass ordinances upon ordinances, some necessary and useful,¹⁹⁶ others unnecessary and obnoxious, till one is bewildered...

Although Nigerian trade had prospered under Lugard's administration, he said, the war had dislocated shipping and 'the blacks are losing their position as Merchants and they are becoming simply middlemen; despite all that the late Bishop Johnson had said no heed is taken by us the natives and we refuse to form a combine or limited company The Syrians who only but yesterday were hawkers in the streets of Lagos have now through combination become masters of the trade and prominent big Merchants At present there are no blacks in the Lagos Chamber of Commerce',¹⁹⁷

The Rev. Campbell also dealt with the land question, taxation, the criminal code, education, the Eleko case, education and the need for Africanisation of certain government posts. He also complained that the Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society was no longer airing the grievances of the country, but praised the Society's work under the 'radicals', Bishop James Johnson and Mojola Agbebi over the land question, The People's Union led by Dr. Randle and Dr. O. Obasa also came under fire for

196. J.G. Campbell: Observation on Some Topics, 1913-1917 During the Administration of Sir Frederick Lugard (Bosere Press, Lagos 1918), p. 3.

197. Ibid., p. 24.

its failure in the water rate agitation. As for the Nigerian Pioneer which had attacked Campbell and the Lagos 'radicals', as well as the Lagos Committee of the N.C.B.W.A., Campbell thought that 'It has gained popularity in some quarters more as anti-native than native It opens its pages with an unwarrantable criticism against Bishop Johnson which has hurt the feelings of all those who love their country.' 'In my opinion', he concluded, 'the paper has done good. It gives the opinion of the minority'.¹⁹⁸

The inadequacies of the Legislative Council did not escape the observation of the reverend gentleman either:

If we are not ripe enough as yet to get an elected representative in the Legislative Council it is nothing but fair and just that the Government nominee should be appointed for five years with hope of reappointment if it is found that he had made good use of his time The world is pushing ahead, why should Nigeria be pushing backward? It will¹⁹⁹ be an advantage if more educated Natives are in the Council.

As for the Nigerian Council, the only good purpose it served was to bring together Chiefs and Kings from various parts of the Protectorate; but the paradox was that though it met in Lagos, no Lagos Chief participated; besides, it 'has not the power of a Legislative Council. It cannot be called a second chamber. The Governor General simply reads his speech. The members say something and any member can put in a motion which the Government may or may not take.'²⁰⁰ Campbell listed twenty-two proposals (including a West African university and an agricultural bank) most of which were later to be advocated by the N.C.B.W.A. in 1920.

198. Ibid., p. 56.

199. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

200. Ibid., p. 11.

J.G. Campbell also addressed several 'open letters' in The Times of Nigeria to the 'big men' of Lagos, castigating them for their lack of interest in local politics, in things African, and for underestimating the contributions made to African life by Bishop James Johnson, Blyden, Henry Carr and R.B. Blaize.²⁰¹ Of the Marcus Garvey Movement he said: 'Although I am against Marcus Garvey in his political programme, yet I am for his Industrial scheme.'²⁰² As for Sir Hugh Clifford's famous attack on the Congress, Campbell protested:

May I respectfully ask who selected and appointed those European Nations who met in Berlin in 1884 and divided the blackman's country amongst themselves? Who appointed and entrusted the white man to appoint himself Trustee of the African peoples? No one than the white man's own common sense My respectful reply to His Excellency is that the Black man's reason and common sense has now reached the stage when he thinks that he should have a National Congress to demand his rights according to his own point of view²⁰³

There is a reference in The Times of Nigeria²⁰⁴ to a pamphlet he wrote in 1921 entitled Our West African Governors, The Congress Movement and Mr. Herbert Macauley; a reviewer (Africanus) tells us that the pamphlet is a vigorous defence of the Congress movement: 'The Patriarch's pen has rarely, if ever, been idle since the inception of the British West African Conference, he has always something to say on the great movement.'²⁰⁵ And, we may add, always

201. The Times of Nigeria, 20/9/1920, p. 6.

202. Ibid., 7/2/1921.

203. Ibid., 14/2/1921, p. 4.

204. Ibid., 29/8/1921.

205. Ibid., 12/9/1921.

something to say on the Lagos politics of his day, even though he was not one of the main actors; even though, in his own words, he had neither 'University appendages which the world call men learned. Nor backed by men of power and influence.'²⁰⁶

and nationalist movements is the significance and effect of the colonial economy on nationalist thought and politics. Discussion relating to the connection between the two has either been too general or has tended to concentrate exclusively on the period after 1945.¹ As Dr. Hopkins has rightly argued, the much-vaunted shibboleth about the impact of 'western economic forces' on African nationalism has done little to shed light on the question. While a mechanistic interpretation is avoided here, we believe there is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the reaction of certain sections of the West African population, whether in the form of riots, protests, nationalist movements or even the 'Negroism', was influenced by commercial motives and linked to the economy and by factors inherent in the structure of the colonial regime.

Aspects of the development of the colonial economy in West Africa up to the outbreak of the Second World War have already

1. Studies of this aspect of West African history are few. The most useful are: A.G. Hopkins: 'Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast, 1900-1945', *Journal of African History*, vol. VII (1966), pp. 1-24; and 'The Porto Novo incidents of 1923', *Journal of African History*, vol. VII, July 1965, pp. 52-75. Jean Suret-Sklair, *Le mouvement national en Afrique Coloniale: 1900-1945* (Editions S. 1966), pp. 1-24, contains an excellent article by Hopkins, however.

CHAPTER V

NATIONALIST THOUGHT AND ACTIVITY AND THE COLONIAL ECONOMY:1918 - 1939

One of the areas of darkness in the study of African protest and nationalist movements is the significance and effect of the colonial economy on nationalist thought and politics. Discussion relating to the connection between the two has either been too general or has tended to concentrate exclusively on the period after 1945.¹ As Dr. Hopkins has rightly argued, the monotonous shibboleth about the impact of 'western economic forces' on African nationalism has done little to shed light on the question.² While a mechanistic interpretation is avoided here, we believe there is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the reaction of certain sections of the West African populace, whether in the form of riots, protests, nationalist movements or economic Pan-Negroism, was influenced by commercial crises and changes in that economy and by factors inherent in its operation under the colonial regime.

Aspects of the development of the colonial economy in British West Africa up to the outbreak of the Second World War have already

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1. Studies of this aspect of West African nationalism are few; the most useful are: A.G. Hopkins: "Economic Aspects of Political Movements in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast 1918-1939", Journal of African History, vol. VII (1966), pp. 133-152; John Ballard: "The Porto Novo Incidents of 1923: Politics in the Colonial Era", ODU (University of Ife Journal of African Studies), vol. 2, No.1, July 1965, pp. 52-75. Jean Suret-Canale: Afrique Noire: L'ère Coloniale: 1900-1945 (Editions Sociales, Paris, 1964). The excellent article by Hopkins, however, contains a few gaps and does not give the 'feel' of the nationalist politics of the period.
 2. A.G. Hopkins, op.cit., p. 133.

been examined in detail by economic historians;³ what concerns us here is not an economic history of the inter-war period but an examination of West African responses to the impact of economic forces during that period, and the significance of those responses for the study of nationalist activity during the period under review. But before considering the nature of those responses, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the post-war economic situation in British West Africa.

With the exception of the temporary break in 1914-1916, the British West African colonies experienced a gradual expansion in export and import trade. A price boom in 1917 continued the upward trend which reached its peak in the first half of 1920. With the exception of palm produce in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone and of rubber in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria, the value of all export staples expanded during the war period; vegetable products also commanded high prices after the 1914-16 contraction, especially during the boom of 1919-1920. In the war years, the value of imports contracted, leading to an unprecedented import boom in 1919-1920. The exclusion of the German firms and markets from West Africa during the war also meant that the African merchants had better commercial opportunities; it also meant that the colonies increased their imports from imperial and American sources. Up to the 1919-1920 boom, the major stimulus to exports

3. Allan McPhee: The Economic Revolution in British West Africa (London, 1926); S.I. Edokpayi: The External Trade of the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria 1885-1945 (University of London M.Sc. (Econ.) thesis, 1958); N.A. Cox-George: Finance and Development in West Africa: The Sierra Leone Experience (London, 1957); A.G. Hopkins: An Economic History of Lagos, 1880-1914 (University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1964).

came from increasing world demand for primary products which was reflected in rising prices. The demand for vegetable oils, for example, coincided with technological changes in their use, particularly in the food industry; the demand for rubber also coincided with the growth of the pneumatic tyre industry. In the case of cocoa, consumer demand, particularly during the war, was the main factor. On the whole the war years through 1920 were a period of prosperity for West African merchants, producers and middlemen. With the growth of cash crops went the growth of individual and communal "plantations", especially in palm oil. Profitability became an important factor in peasant production and planting. At the same time, trade fluctuations influenced the level of prosperity in the domestic sectors of each colony; for example, price changes in world markets influenced local market prices and the economic interdependence between wage labour, export and food croppers. The incomes of these classes of producers and of middlemen, therefore, fluctuated with external trade, and in times of crisis this led to hardship on the producers and to indebtedness, as well as to the ruin of many a middleman.⁴ Higher income from cocoa and rubber farms also led to less concentration on food crops, a development which was to have serious consequences particularly in the towns during the 1921-22 slump and the depression of the 1930s. While the war inflated prices and benefited the producers, external demand also had the effect of generating instability into the production, as is seen in the 1920-21 slump.

4. See Edokpayi, *op.cit.*, pp. 196-197.

World market conditions changed as a result of the war and of post-war reconstruction. In the 1920s most of the industrialised economies of Europe stagnated and in the 1930s they became depressed as international trade disintegrated and economic nationalism became the creed of the day. The depression had adverse effects on primary producers in general as world demand for such products lost its rising trend in terms of real value after 1929. In reaction to the changed world conditions after 1918, Europe and America adopted measures which directly constrained world trade: from the neo-mercantilism and 'open door' policy of the pre-war years with its attendant liberal nationalism, they retreated behind the barricades of economic and integral nationalism. France, Britain and Holland resorted to tariffs, financial controls, preferences and quotas to secure the trade and resources of their colonies for their own markets. Great Britain even contemplated an Empire Resources Development Committee - a proposal which was vigorously opposed by bewildered West African merchants and nationalist groups, and in fact played an important part in the decision of the West African intelligentsia to form an inter-territorial nationalist organisation and to demand representative institutions.

With this new protectionism, the traditional 'Open Door' commercial policy in West Africa was severely modified. The new policy began with the imposition of discriminatory Export Duties on palm kernels in 1919-22 and on tin between 1919 and 1938. Although some of these impositions were made for revenue purposes

only, they were viewed as discriminatory duties in the interests of the Empire and at the expense of the producers whose markets were curtailed and whose shipping facilities were very limited.⁵

The 1919-1920 boom, however, did not last,⁶ and the period 1921-1939 witnesses violent fluctuations in which depressions followed booms at regular intervals. Although the export volume for the British West African colonies rose between 1919 and 1929, prices were low; however, the value of trade in general was slightly above that of 1916-1920.⁷ Output of palm produce, cocoa, groundnuts and cotton rose substantially, but export trade contracted until 1924, and the fairly stable price level gradually fell. Average price index dropped from the 1916-20 level to a point below that of 1918, though there was a slight improvement for cocoa in the late 1920s.⁸ From 1930 to 1937 there was a market depression, with the severe depression of 1930-1934 followed by a slight recovery after 1935. Volume continued its upward trend to the peak of 1937 but prices and value fell from the level of the 1920s. Except for cocoa, rubber and certain minerals, general recovery after 1935 was very slow and, as in the 1920s, prices fluctuated violently in the 1930s. The general price trend was downward throughout the 1930s.

5. F.V. Meyer: Britain's Colonies in World Trade (O.U.P., 1948), pp. 88-89.

6. W.A. Lewis: An Economic Survey (London, 1949), passim.;
H.W. Arndt: The Economic Lessons of the Nineteen Thirties (O.U.P., 1944), pp. 9-33; J.W.F. Rowe: Primary Commodities in International Trade (O.U.P., 1965), pp. 78-79.

7. S.I. Edokpayi, op.cit., p. 58.

8. Ibid., p. 59.

The 'economic revolution' in West Africa not only introduced a monetary economy and expanded commerce, it also introduced social and economic values among African entrepreneurs and social classes, notably the lawyer-merchant class. These groups had evolved in the atmosphere of economic liberalism and had imbibed the values of what Delavignette calls 'bourgeois colonial society': their politics and nationalist activity was, therefore, greatly influenced by these values. Although the position of these classes, particularly the small traders, had begun to change with the development of the colonial economy in the 1890s,⁹ it was in reality the Great War and its attendant economic crisis which had a more immediate and significant impact on their status. During the stagnation of the 1880s and in the 90s, it had become apparent that the growing sophistication of commerce, expansion of markets and competition from extra-territorial firms meant that the African business man would either have to be more efficient or play a secondary role in the colonial economy. Economic survival meant efficiency; but as in most cases, this warning was partly unheeded as trade gradually expanded between 1900 and 1920.¹⁰ During the war, however, with economic controls, discriminatory export duties, currency shortage and loss of shipping, it became clear to educated Africans both in business and in the professions that the cosmopolitan days of harmony and less aggressive competition were over and that the era of the combine and of monopoly capitalism had arrived. It was also towards the end of the war that the old

9. Allan McPhee, *op.cit.*, pp. 72-74.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 42 ff.

type of protest was succeeded by a more articulate liberal nationalism directed by the very groups whose interests were at stake in the post-war colonial period. And one of the fascinating aspects of this nationalism is the way in which passionately felt economic grievances were accompanied by moderate constitutional demands by a leadership which created a pan-African organisation (the N.C.B.W.A.) as a political pressure group and as a means of finding a solution to the economic plight of the African merchant, producer and business man. What strikes the student is the persistent manner in which this middle class nationalist leadership analysed the legacy of the war and the constitutional consequences of the economic revolution in British West Africa. It was clear to these gentlemen that the solution to their problem, as well as the protection of their socio-economic privileges and the creation of more openings for their group in the colonial administration, lay in their acquisition of some measure of political responsibility in the colonial legislatures which were still the rubber stamps of a 'veiled oligarchy'. It is true that Pan-African idealism and the appeal to racial solidarity did play an important part in their agitation but, fundamentally, their very constitutionalism was a defence of their own interests. Their implied assumption was that they 'represented substantially' the people by virtue of education, commerce and civilisation; that they constituted 'the advanced thought' of British West Africa, and were capable of enough cohesion and responsibility to support elective political institutions in their various colonies. This claim was at first

rejected by Whitehall and the colonial administration, and the history of the Congress movement is largely the story of how this clash was resolved in a constitutional compromise between 1922 and 1926.

In Sierra Leone, where the Congress movement was to have its strongest support, the frustration of the educated classes and the African traders and the unemployed in the big towns was given open expression in the rice and anti-Syrian riots of 1919 and in the workers' strike that same year. Though directed against the Lebanese traders, these riots were in fact a violent and unco-ordinated protest against what were believed to be injustices arising from the management of the colonial economy. It was in Freetown, Sierra Leone, that post-war discontent in West Africa first found expression.

One French commentator writing on the economic and financial aspects of the nationalist movement in British West Africa observed that in Sierra Leone:

L'annee 1919 fut par cette colonie une annee calamiteuse. Une epidemie d'influenza fit perir 10.000 personnes. L'insuffisance des vivres, surtout du riz, causa la famine. Le mecontentement des habitants de Freetown se tourne contre les Syriens, impopulaires, accuses d'accaparement. Ceux-ci furent attaques, pilles; trois d'entre eux moururent, massacres. D'autres causes de troubles furent le chomage de nombreux travailleurs, devenus sans emploi depuis que Freetown avait cesse d'etre une base navale, le cours force du papier monnaie, les speculations des profiteurs de guerre et l'elevation du prix des marchandises europeenes....¹¹ Les employes du chemin de fer se mirent en greve

11. Camille Martin: "Afrique Occidentale Anglaise: Le mouvement nationaliste". Bulletin du Comite de l'Afrique Francaise, vol.32, 1922, pp. 47-55.

In the following pages we shall examine in detail the economic situation which led to the strike and the rice riots in Freetown in 1919, and which formed the stirrings of the new type of nationalist politics. We shall also examine in detail the economic grievances and arguments of the Congress movement which met in Accra eight months after the Freetown incidents. We shall show how a smaller group of 'radicals', especially the youth movement, became dissatisfied with the leadership of the Congress nationalists and with their method of solving the economic crisis in British West Africa. Finally, we shall examine briefly some early attempts by West Africans at economic self-help and Pan-African commercial co-operation.

The war immediately affected the external trade of Sierra Leone; both export and import trade declined throughout the war, slowly recovering after the war. It also accentuated the depression which had already begun early in 1913.¹² This decline in the volume of trade was partly due to the loss of the German palm kernel market which, up to 1913, accounted for 87% of the total value of all exports from Sierra Leone. By the end of 1914, trade with Germany had ceased completely. The decline in output was also partly affected by crop failure. The first rice harvest of 1914 failed and the majority of farmers diverted their attention from kernel collection to the cultivation of a second rice crop to ward off a possible hunger season. Decline in prices also affected the decline in the export sector. With the exception of piassava, there was a recorded drop in prices in 1914 for all the

12. N.A. Cox-George, op.cit., pp. 171-172.

main articles of export. Palm kernel prices steadily declined, only recovering slowly after 1916; in 1915 palm kernel prices reached a low of £12.10. per ton. Although commodity prices recovered after 1916, the profitability of the export trade was reduced by increased freight, insurance and handling costs; also, labour wages had gone up as prices of foodstuffs had risen after the war. The loss of German shipping, the commandeering of British shipping for military and naval purposes, and the U.K. dockers' strike in 1915 created a shipping bottleneck which greatly inconvenienced West African merchants and business men. Moreover, Elder Dempster Lines, the West African shipping monopoly, had increased its freight charges by 50% above pre-war charges. Tonnage declined from 2,931,085 in 1913 to 1,736,247 in 1918.¹³ This holding up of export goods affected the profits of producers and middlemen not only in Sierra Leone but all along the West Coast.

As we have noted earlier, the economic situation improved slightly in 1917, partly because British shipping was no longer menaced by German submarines and partly because the kernel crushing industry in Britain was being given a boost. Increased demand for imported foodstuffs in 1917 was due to war conditions, particularly the diversion of agricultural labour into combat and carrier services, and the inflation in the economy.¹⁴ The use of Freetown as an imperial coaling station also increased the demand for local foodstuffs. This not only swelled the income stream but also relieved the depression in the colony's external trade, while

13. Ibid., p. 173.

14. Ibid., pp. 177, 183.

creating a boom in the internal economy. Unemployment was also partly relieved by the awarding of Army contracts for building barracks and other works and by the drafting of men (about 8,000) into the military. These tended to stimulate the internal economy by strengthening demand for merchandise and other commodities, but they also created a wage-induced inflation.¹⁵ Long before the wage-induced inflation, however, the price inflation of which Freetown newspapers complained so loudly, had also had its effect. The outbreak of war and the attendant security measures taken created a panic, with the result that there was a rush to buy and hoard food supplies, business houses correspondingly charged high prices for their goods.¹⁶ The Government set up a committee to regulate food supplies and to fix prices, but the control was not comprehensive; while the price of all controlled imported food-stuffs rose, the terms of trade of the Native rice producer deteriorated,¹⁷ and this not only added to the rice shortage but most probably encouraged black-marketing of rice, especially among the Lebanese, and this became an important factor in the riots and agitation of mid 1919. Wholesale firms which profited more from the price increases were at an advantage over petty or retail traders who were to form the bulk of the petitioners during the

15. Ibid.

16. The Sierra Leone Weekly News of August 8, 1914 reported: "Owing to the scare of the failure of foodstuff in the city, prices rose nearly 100 per cent within twenty-four hours. Paterfamilias moved from store to store to secure the necessaries of life for their households and many were glad to pay fancy prices for whatever they could get."

17. N.A. Cox-George, op.cit., p. 185, footnote 35.

riots. As Cox-George has observed, "the control of prices was a factor leading to the transfer of wealth from the small man, the petty trader, to the wholesaler or the larger firms. Competitions became more favourable to the larger commercial houses, and this, together with such devices as the hiring of 'selling girls' to retail their goods, helped them to undersell effectively the old class of African 'merchants' or middlemen and so hasten the decline of the latter."¹⁸ Socially, the wage inflation added wealth unto those that had and increased the hardship of the poor. Government and commercial employees, especially the large army of clerks, were hard hit, though the hardship of the former was relieved by the grant of war bonuses after 1918. It is significant, however, that many who described themselves as clerks, traders or artisans actively participated in the disturbances of 1919.

The rice and anti-Syrian riots broke out in Freetown on the night of July 18, 1919 during the celebrations to mark the conclusion of the armistice. Troops were called out and a public enquiry was held.¹⁹ In spite of bitter opposition from leading persons in Freetown disclaiming responsibility for the disturbances, the Governor decided that the City revenues should be debited with the cost (£36,510) of the Lebanese losses since, in his view, 'the Protectorate natives were in no sense anti-Syrian'.²⁰ The Freetown petition to Viscount Milner was organised

18. Ibid., p. 185.

19. See correspondence enclosed in C.O. 267/558.

20. Para. 6 of despatch no. 58875, by Governor Wilkinson, 13/11/1920 C.O. 267/588.

by leading Creoles among whom were Sam Barlatt the Mayor of Freetown, J.H. Thomas a merchant of Little East Street, R.N. Hebron a barrister, C. Hotobah During, also a barrister, as well as Claudius May, editor of The Sierra Leone Weekly News - all these gentlemen were to play prominent parts in the formation and in the politics of the Sierra Leone branch of the N.C.B.W.A. The petition itself was signed by a representative cross-section of Freetown, mostly produce merchants, traders, clerks, artisans, labourers. Out of 657 petitioners, 146 described themselves as traders or merchants, 189 were artisans, 119 were clerks; 24 described themselves as teachers, clergymen or lawyers; the rest included labourers, pensioners and a great number of unemployed. The original petitioners were mainly the Creole elite together with six chiefs and headmen. Out of the original 102 petitioners, 24 were merchants and produce dealers, 24 were lawyers, doctors and councillors, 10 were teachers and clergymen, the rest were artisans and clerks.²¹

The riots began on the night of Friday, July 18th when attacks were made on the shops and houses of Syrian traders and merchants in Freetown: these attacks began simultaneously in the Eastern, Central and Western Wards and resulted in considerable damage to property and extensive looting of merchandise.²² Why the riots coincided with the torch-light procession held that night in

21. See petitions in C.O. 267/582, vol. 3.

22. See "Petition of the Ratepayers of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Against the Passing of a Bill Entitled 'The Colony and Protectorate Riot (Damages) Compensation Ordinance, 1920'," para. 1.

Freetown by 'a band of young men, mostly mercantile clerks, who had formed themselves into a Society called The Native Commercial Employees' League to celebrate the armistice' was not clearly explained by the petitioners, except that it might have been a coincidence. Those who took part in this procession which later developed into extensive looting and damage to property were described by the petitioners as 'the bulk of the population of the better classes'.²³ Nor was it explained who actually started the rioting that night; the petition merely stated that the riots were 'commenced simultaneously' and that those arrested after the riots were neither merchants, shopkeepers nor clerks who, it is reasonable to assume, would have had a direct interest in the matter; on the contrary, said the petitioners:

The class of people who would have engineered the disturbances, if that view were correct; viz: the Sierra Leone Merchants and shopkeepers, were as much taken aback at the riots as any one else. Not a single one of the hundred and fifty or so persons who were arrested and tried in connection with the rioting belongs to this class. Moreover, Sierra Leone Merchants of high standing who were believed to have been profiteering in rice were the objects of attacks as violent and as persistent as that against any of the Syrians.²⁴

It was also vigorously denied that the disturbances, which lasted over a month and were widespread in the Protectorate, were 'engineered in the interests of some Sierra Leone traders'. According to the petitioners, 'the rioters belonged to the hooligan and irresponsible section of the people of whom a large number are immigrants from the Protectorate who, under normal conditions, supply

23. Ibid., para. 3.

24. Ibid., para. 14 (a), p.4.

the casual and unskilled labour of the City'.²⁵

Whether the incidents of 1919 amounted to a 'conspiracy' of the Creoles, as most of the officials believed, is difficult, if not impossible to answer. Like most conspiracy theories, the explanation would be easy and simple. The fact, however, remains that the disturbances, whether organised or not, were the culmination of several important factors - economic and natural and, to a small extent, racial - but principally economic as the petition shows, as post-war conditions illustrate, and as newspaper commentary on rising food prices and Syrian economic sharp-practices makes clear.²⁶ Influenza and heavy rains had also contributed to

25. Ibid., para. (e).

26. See The Aurora, 26/7/1919 and The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 2/8/1919. The former newspaper was virulently hostile to the Lebanese, describing them as the mythical 'hobgoblin' and as the Iagos of West African commerce. The Weekly News, a moderate weekly, merely argued that to go to 'the heart of the matter', one had to recognise that the raid on the Lebanese was 'not an offensive but a defensive act If Creoles were connected with the business this is their justification - namely, that the act was one of defence by people whose very life was being rudely shaken almost to extinction by heartless traders who are aliens'. See also the minute to C.O. 48071, C.O. 267/582, 19/8/1919: 'As regards the cause of the riot, it was undoubtedly largely economic. For some years there have been complaints that the Syrians outmatch the Creoles and their unpopularity is increased by the accusation, which seems to have a good foundation, that they have been profiteering in rice, which is the staple food of the people and is almost at famine prices'. See also the report of Acting Governor Evelyn in C.O. 267/582/48071, 31/7/1919, para. 17-18. A poem entitled "The Syrians" appeared in The Sierra Leone Weekly News of 13/9/1919 read:

"Grass he tells us we will eat,
When with vengeance on rice did sit;
Leaves and brooms and all he cornered,
Farina, palm oil and kola;
On the blood of the land."

the failure of the rice crop in the Protectorate; the government's failure to distribute stocks of rice in time to prevent unrest also contributed to the desperation of the unemployed and low-paid workers.²⁷ The labourer who earned 1/- a day found that rice had risen from 1d. a cup to 5d. a cup. Native merchants resented the economic dominance of the Syrians who had not only by their business ability taken over most of the retail trade but had also virtually monopolised the kola trade in the Protectorate.²⁸ The petitioners also accused the Syrians of forming 'rings and combines by which prices of produce and merchandise were being artificially forced up,' and of indulging in marriages of economic convenience with local women who were subsequently used by them to capture the petty trade from Freetown women.²⁹ Other allegations of a more emotional and racial nature referred to the sexual proclivities of Syrians and their alleged corruption of the 'young girls attending the higher seminaries' and 'girls of reputed respectability'. The 'arrogance' of Syrians who called Sierra Leoneans 'niggers' and 'alaves' was also complained of alongside grievances arising from economic competition.³⁰ Race was further mixed with economics when at the beginning of the petition it was stated that during the few weeks preceding the riots, 'there was considerable indignation in some parts of the City at the report of

27. Section D, enclosure to despatch No. 580, C.O. 267/588, 13/11/1920.

28. Appendix 'B': "Notes respecting illegal practices by Dealers in Rice", C.O. 267/582/58875.

29. Para. 4 of Petition.

30. Ibid., para. 12, p.3.

the racial disturbances in Liverpool, Cardiff, and a few other places in England and Wales which gave rise to considerable apprehension that the "Sea-boys" repatriated from those places with a deep sense of injury would instigate reprisals in Sierra Leone against the white residents'. It is interesting to note, however, the order in which the grievances against the Lebanese were listed:

- (a) The throttling up of the Native Trader by his Syrian rival,
- (b) The arrogant demeanour of Syrians generally towards Sierra Leoneans,
- (c) Improper sexual relationships.

These were the reasons given by the Freetown City Council for the cause of the riots. They made it clear that they were "convinced that the disturbances were due wholly and solely to the excessively high prices demanded for food, which goaded the classes most severely affected past endurance; and that the plot was sedulously concealed because those who conceived it would not obtain general approbation."³¹

From Freetown, the riots spread into the Protectorate - Moyamba (July 25th) and Kangahun (July 26th).³² Sporadic anti-Syrian riots and lootings also occurred in Mano, Boia, Makump, Bo and Bonthe. At Mange and Port Lokko, where Syrian stores were also threatened, the rice situation was so desperate that the rumour was quickly spread around that "the Government no agree for the Syrians to be here".³³ In Freetown itself, raids on Syrian shops continued and

31. Ibid., para. 15, p. 4.

32. See telegram enclosed in C.O. 44115, C.O. 267/582, 29/7/1919.

33. Telegrams in C.O. 48071, ibid., 31/7/1919.

about three people were killed; the police and the military were so stretched that little could be done to stem the violence: a few of the troops even joined in the looting.³⁴ Although some order was restored, the atmosphere was so tense that between July and October, Gold Coast troops had to be sent to Freetown.³⁵

Viscount Milner took a serious view of the situation when he stated:

The existing position appears to be a very serious one. The riots, which began a month ago, have not been put down It seems to me that it is a case for strong measures to restore the authority of the law and to mark the distinction between the civilisation of the British and the Ottoman Empire.³⁶

The situation became more serious and complicated when the technical staff and labourers in the railway and public works department went on strike on July 14th demanding that they too must benefit from the war bonus given to clerical staff. They were mostly daily wage men who had hitherto not been included in the bonus scheme, their wages ran from 1/- to 5/- a day.³⁷ They argued that while their wages were calculated on a daily rate ranging among technical staff from 3/- to 5/-, and among labourers

34. Minute to C.O. 267/582/49632, 27/8/1919; also enclosure to C.O. 55464, 24/9/1919. Acting Governor to Viscount Milner. In the Protectorate, soldiers joined the looters at Makene in the Karene district on the Boia-Makump line, C.O. 267/582/48226, 7/8/1919, para. 6, 9-11.

35. C.O. 267/583/64385, 20/10/1919; the troops left Freetown on 27/10/1919 - C.O. 267/583/6659, 6/11/1919.

36. Minute to C.O. 48071, 19/8/1919.

37. The Sierra Leone Executive Council recommended that the men other than labourers be paid war bonus on the scale approved for clerks in January 1917 i.e. 20% on salaries not exceeding £90 p.a., and that labourers should get an increase of 3d. per day: C.O. 267/582/45278.

from 1/- to 3/- per day, they were in fact paid monthly, were in permanent Government employment, and that their aggregate salary was equal to that of some of the clerical grades who had received a war bonus while they the workers were excluded. They also claimed that they belonged "for the most part to the same social class as that from which the clerical staff is recruited, and that their exclusion from the war bonus scheme brings them into contempt with their more fortunate brothers in the clerical branch."³⁸ Apart from their exclusion from the war bonus and their sensitivity to their socio-economic status in Creole society, the workers had other economic grievances like rising food prices at a time when wage levels remained low. On July 15th, technical staff and labourers employed by the Public Works followed the example of the railwaymen and went on strike. They too wanted a war bonus and had been hard hit by rising prices.³⁹ To the agitation against the Lebanese and the rice riots was now joined the workers' strikes, and in the eyes of the press the two were inseparable.

It is noteworthy, however, that the riots and lootings in the Protectorate involved very few Creoles: the vast majority of rioters were Protectorate peoples, and the attacks were made on Lebanese traders only. European merchants and Creole traders were not attacked, though Creole traders suspected of storing Lebanese goods were threatened.⁴⁰ Official opinion was agreed that the

38. Ibid., also The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 19/7/1919, p. 8.

39. C.O. 267/582/45278.

40. C.O. 267/582/51292, Conf. 21/8/1919, Officer Commanding the Troops, West Africa, to the Secretary, War Office.

riots were a direct consequence of post-war economic hardships, especially unemployment, food shortage and commodity control schemes imposed by the imperial government. Governor Wilkinson described the socio-economic situation accurately when he observed in his address to the Legislative Council in 1919:

The year 1919 has been one of much distress. The early rains of last year had hindered the clearing of the farms: the Influenza epidemic had interfered with the harvesting of the crop. The shortage of rice has been the main feature of the current year. There was a famine; and there were riots Our taxation weighs more heavily on the poor. Export duties and railway-freights fall ultimately on the producer. The tax-payer in this case is the inhabitant of the Protectorate who collects and prepares palm-produce for the market; he represents, in fact, the very poorest section of the community. And it is unfortunate that while the price of all imported commodities had risen enormously during the war, the price of palm oil and palm kernels had been kept at the pre-war level: and this - to some extent at least - by direct state control. The peasantry of the Protectorate have suffered severely. I do not wish to minimise the claims of others to some compensation for the increased cost of living: but unless economy is observed we shall only be lessening the troubles of the wealthier classes by throwing increased burdens on the poorer

In the Colony the war has seen great changes. The use of Freetown as a naval base led to a great demand for casual labour That special demand has now ceased. Many men who were attracted to the port by the prospect of high pay have been thrown out of employment. It is to this element of the population - now become a dangerous element - that we owe the prevailing unrest⁴¹

The strikes by the workers, together with the processions during the night of the armistice celebrations, had created an atmosphere for the disturbances that erupted on July 18th,⁴² but

⁴¹. Address to the Legislative Council, 1919; C.O. 267/582/71851.

⁴². C.O. 267/582/51292, 6/8/1919, Colonel B. Faunce to the Secretary, War Office. If official accounts are accepted, the Protectorate Natives showed no real hostility towards the Lebanese traders - see the letter to the District Commissioner, Moyamba, from Chief Alimamy Coroma, 24/8/1919 enclosed in despatch No. 456,

there was uncertainty as to whether the riots and strikes were organized, and if so, by whom. Concerning the rice riots, Colonel Faunce, officer commanding the W.A.F.F., thought that "the affair was planned by the educated natives, with the intention of seizing and selling cheaply hoarded stocks of rice by the agency of the aboriginal residents in Freetown, and that the mobs at once increased so rapidly that those responsible lost all control."⁴³ The Acting Governor, Mr. Evelyn, was of the opinion that there was "little doubt" that the riots were "planned and organized beforehand".⁴⁴ G.W. James, District Commissioner of Sherbro thought that those caught looting Lebanese shops in the Protectorate were merely those who could be found in any mob; according to him, "The real culprits, the prime movers in the whole movement, have yet to be traced the Syrians who know the most, are at present not a little nervous about coming forward, and the Creoles, being sympathisers with the movement, do not wish to give anything away".⁴⁵ Mr. R.A. Maude the Attorney General was more certain than the others. In his view, "The riot was organized by Creoles and started

42. Contd.] C.O. 267/583/60683, 9/10/1919. According to the Rev. Max Gorvie, a Mende writer, during the riots, "the Creole traders appealed to African solidarity, persuading the Natives that they were all one people and popularising the ditty 'We all nar wan konko';" quoted in M.P. Banton: Urbanization in Sierra Leone (Social Sciences Research Centre, University of Edinburgh, 1954), p. 122.

43. C.O. 267/582/48071, 31/7/1919, para. 20.

44. C.O. 267/582/51291, 19/8/1919.

45. Enclosure to S. Leone Conf. 7505, 29/1/1920, p. 10 *ibid.* It may be useful to recall that the Creoles were made scapegoats in the 1898 Hut Tax War.

by them; once it had been started the crowd got out of hand that surprised the Creoles The people had the idea that the loot was their bonus".⁴⁶ The Governor, however, thought it "most unlikely" that leading Creoles would have organised the riots: instead, he attributed the riots to unemployment and the high cost of living. In the general confusion, however, the strike was confused with the rice riots, and the bonus question conveniently used to explain away the anti-Syrian riots. Consequently, 'bonus' became the battle cry of the hungry mobs and the refrain of a rather cleverly constructed song:

Strike don cam for Bonus,
We unite for bonus;
Creole Boy ner danger Boy,
Bonus, Bo-Bonus!

Kaiser⁴⁷ make Bonus,
When we take Bonum;
Peace Terms wan Bonam up,
Bonus, Bo-Bonus!

Milner⁴⁸ say pay Bonus,
Barker⁴⁹ say bite first,
Maud⁵⁰ say make Red-belleh shoot,
Bonus, Bo-Bonus!

Bonus Bona Bonum
Boni Bone Bona
We want small Bonus
Bonus, Bo-Bonus! etc.

46. Ibid.

47. Refers to Kaiser Wilhelm of Imperial Germany.

48. Refers to Viscount Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

49. Barker was the Acting General Manager of Sierra Leone Railway whose workers went on strike over the bonus question.

50. R.A. Maude, Attorney General of the Sierra Leone Government.

Last year we say ner Flu,
 This year we call am Strike;
 When all dem Coral⁵¹ go,⁵²
 Then Bonus, Sweet Bonus!

The strikes, which lasted over a week, were so well organised, and the riots so serious and prolonged, that the administration came to attribute this unprecedented wave of disturbances, since the Hut Tax War, to outside subversive influences.⁵³ Even Governor Wilkinson believed that these alleged outside influences (which he could not identify) were at the back of the riots:

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a focus of disloyalty in this Colony. This disloyalty, I have some reason to believe, is inspired from outside the Empire and has money and organisation behind it.⁵⁴

As far as the Freetown press was concerned, however, the strikes and riots, together with the agitation against the proposed Criminal Code, were purely internal matters which partly reflected the growing race consciousness of Negroes everywhere. Indeed, an editorial on the Lebanese was of the opinion that some kind of political party or pressure group was needed to sustain the anti-Syrian and Criminal Code agitation and that the agitation should not be allowed to peter out but must be used to create the

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51. The Lebanese traders were also called 'corals' because of the coral beads and other cheap articles they used to hawk around the streets and markets when they first appeared as petty traders.
52. This was known as 'The Bonus Song' and was 'sung during the Great Strike and Peace Celebration, July 18th to 22nd 1919'; see enclosure to Sierra Leone Confi. 7505, 29/1/1920, C.O. 267/582.
53. See the official reports in Sierra Leone Confi. 7305, 29/1/1920, ibid.
54. Ibid., the alleged outside influence was probably Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. which was then at the height of its activities; it could also have been a reference to the Comintern, vide Gambia Secret M.P. No. 57, 4/9: "Reports on Bolshevik political and labour agitation", especially the secret circular by Winston S. Churchill, 10/6/1921. G.R.O.

foundations of some kind of political movement:

The disappointing after-effect, as a result of any great movement in the direction of an agitation by the native community against measures or attitudes initiated or adopted by the Government may be due, whatever other causes, to the absence of a recognized Public Institution, not in any way under obligation to the Government; and it is time that this be recognized. It is curious how this opportunity was allowed to slide away Government diplomacy or not, the Syrians will go. Africa for the Africans; it is their God assigned heritage⁵⁵

Immediately after the railwaymen's strike another editorial with a Pan-African bias, put the disturbances in the context of the new nationalism:

There is already a great and serious awakening among the backward race. This has been called by those who know best and are following the profound movements of the times, the birth of a new race consciousness If the great world-wide war has occasioned many valuable developments it has done this one great thing for the backward peoples of the world. It has opened their eyes to their own grand possibilities. It has moved them to see visions and dream dreams America has wonderfully taken the lead. Indeed, it is the race manhood that has gained consciousness of its own existence No man henceforth ought to be a puppet in the hands of another Is it not time we call together a big mass meeting of all our best men to consult as to our future salvation? Why has not Sierra Leone taken a part in the Pan-African Congress held in Paris Is she not ripe and strong?⁵⁶

Before concluding our remarks on the economics of the new bourgeois nationalism in Freetown, we must consider another interpretation of the grievances of the African middleman against the Lebanese traders. Dr. Marwan I. Hanna,⁵⁷ taking a Lebanese point of view, argues that resentment against Lebanese immigrants and

55. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 30/8/1919, p. 5.

56. Ibid., 19/7/1919, p. 4.

57. Marwan I. Hanna: Lebanese Emigrants in West Africa: Their Effect on Lebanon and West Africa. D. Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1959.

traders in West Africa was not confined to the African middleman who is generally depicted as a victim of the aggressive competition of the Lebanese. In his view, as early as 1910 the Government of French West Africa "under pressure from the French Chamber of Commerce"⁵⁸ - had already introduced legislation restricting Lebanese immigration to the whole of French West Africa, and in British West Africa similar legislation was passed between 1924 and 1926. He contends that in British West Africa, hostility against the Lebanese retail traders was "due mainly to pressure of Foreign commercial interests which feared increasing competition of the Lebanese In British West Africa the big European firms did not come out openly against the Lebanese as was the case in French African territories, but chose to press the issue under the guise of protecting the interests of the native African population. They did in fact do much to incite the natives against the Lebanese traders by accusing these latter of hoarding essential food stuffs and displacing the small African traders."⁵⁹ Dr. Hanna proceeds to argue that even if the Lebanese had displaced the African merchant from his trade, "it is very doubtful whether in those early years, 1924-1926, the natives were so much aware of this fact and so articulate as to be able to start an agitation in the papers."⁶⁰ The history of post-war nationalism in British West Africa shows that Dr. Hanna's contention is groundless. It may well be that the European firms feared competition from the Lebanese retailers

58. Ibid., p. 92.

59. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

60. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

and that they did 'incite the natives against the Lebanese traders', but as we have tried to show earlier, there is no evidence for this assertion. All the available evidence shows that the "articulate vocal minority"⁶¹ of which Dr. Hanna speaks, was perfectly capable of seeing the implications of economic competition and commercial crises for its role and status in colonial society without the benevolent assistance or the incitement of any outside factor. To argue as Hanna does, is to fall into the error of attributing any African agitation or nationalist movement to an external factor. If there were any external factors which influenced the activity of this "articulate vocal minority" (whose historical evolution Dr. Hanna has not even considered), they surely must have been the commercial vicissitudes of the colonial economy and the race consciousness which followed the end of the Great War. If Dr. Hanna had put the question in historical perspective, he would certainly have found, as we shall show later, that the press of the West African nationalist elite had given serious thought to economic questions as soon as they perceived the effect of the war on their interests, and that they were critical not only of the Lebanese traders but also of the European firms and even of the economic measures imposed by the imperial government, and that in response to these problems they had planned and initiated an interterritorial movement which, they hoped, would help to protect their interests and give their agitation some unity and coherence. One may argue that the position of the Lebanese as

61. Ibid., p. 97.

'strangers' and the relative absence of social distance between them and the Sierra Leoneans made them easy targets and convenient scapegoats in any disturbance stemming from economic causes;⁶² but to argue that those who were hostile to them and viewed them as exploiters were 'incited' by other foreigners who were equally suspect,⁶³ amounts to a misunderstanding of the various factors which influenced the growth of nationalism in British West Africa after the war. It is not necessary to be an ideologist or to agree with every Marxist explanation to appreciate the view that 'the chief problem of the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and to emerge victorious from the competition with the bourgeoisie of another nationality. Hence its desire to secure its "own", its "home" market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism'.⁶⁴ Dr. Hanna's "articulate vocal minority" were

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62. R. Bayly Winder: "The Lebanese in West Africa", Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. IV, No.3, April 1962, pp. 296-333; see also the comments on 'the stranger' by Lloyd A. Fallers in the same journal. It may be noted that economic hardship also led to similar country-wide boycott of European and Lebanese merchants in the Gold Coast in 1943 and 1948: see D. Apter: The Gold Coast in Transition (Princeton, 1955), p. 169 ff.; K. Nkrumah: Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 75.
63. See Resolutions of the Conference of Africans of British West Africa (Electric Law Press Ltd., 1920), pp. 2-3: "Alien Problems with Particular Reference to the Syrian Question"; also the Report of the Proceedings of a Meeting held in London between the League of Nations Union and the Delegates of the National Congress of British West Africa (Electric Law Press Ltd., 1920), pp. 19-20.
64. Joseph Stalin: Marxism and the National Question (New York, 1942), p. 38, quoted in K.R. Minogue: Nationalism (B.T.Batsford Ltd., London, 1967), p. 141. In a study of the connection between economic liberalism and nationalism, the conclusion is reached that "throughout the history of the nation-State, vital causal connexions have existed between nationalism and the

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very much concerned about the market, and they did say so.

Even before they were 'incited' by the Europeans, the Africans had begun to agitate in their local newspapers against the monopolistic practices of European firms, against economic controls and discriminatory duties imposed by Whitehall, and against rising food prices. They had even decided, as early as 1916-17, that in order to do something about the economic situation, they would have to have some voice in their own legislatures and that the obsolete Crown Colony system of government would have to be replaced by representative institutions. The Lebanese question was widely discussed, although it was in Sierra Leone that it became the peculiar problem of the Creole middle class. Throughout British West Africa, the most important topics in nationalist circles were the much hated Export Duty on Palm Kernels, the proposed Empire Resources Development Committee and the growing threat of foreign firms. One of the leading Sierra Leone merchants who was later to play a prominent role in the Congress movement, thought that the imposition of the Export Duty would put the Native exporter "absolutely at the mercy of all the Agents both here and in England

64. Contd.] economic system. The nexus has proved to be reciprocal, although the two chains of causation were of different importance in the successive stages of historical development. Economic interests, and the social groups representing these interests, belonged to the most influential forces which promoted the rise of the nation-State and the first awakening of national consciousness Whatever causal connexion developed between economic liberalism and nationalism was due to the political, social, and technical environment in which free enterprise had to operate, rather than to the genuine tendencies of free enterprise itself." Nationalism (R.I.I.A.; O.U.P., 1939), pp. 239-242. This study quite rightly warns against discussing the political implications of any economic system without analysing the social environment in which it operates.

as the brokers in England the majority of those who pose themselves as African Merchants aided by Capitalists and a few Brokers in England have hitherto fattened on the exploitation of the Native Shippers, Middlemen and Producers, any Government support would be disastrous in that it foreshadows the elimination of the intelligent Native absolutely from earning a livelihood from the products of his own country, a condition emphasised by the rigging of the Market already".⁶⁵ In the same journal, C.D. Hotobah During, another leading Creole and local politician, mounted a similar attack on the export duty and on the activities of the combines; in conclusion he asked his readers:

.... why are Colonies like Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold Coast still denied representative governments? Or, on the other hand, why is it impossible for the establishment of a United West Africa with a House of Representatives ...?⁶⁶

Significantly enough reviews of free trade literature like J.A. Hobson's The New Protectionism began to appear in some of the Freetown newspapers.⁶⁷ Beoku-Betts even reviewed one entitled Essays on Duty and Discipline. The editor of the Weekly News advised his readers to read The New Protectionism "in conjunction with the evidence and report on the Palm Kernel question Each country should adopt free trade or protection or both in accordance with its needs". This was followed by a sharp attack on both European merchants and Lebanese who were accused of hoarding rice in a time of scarcity. Another editorial urged that the solution

65. F.W. Dove to the Editor, The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 17/2/1917, p. 5.

66. Ibid., 3/2/1917, p. 13.

67. See The Colonial and Provincial Reporter, 14/10/1916, p. 6.

to the high cost of living and to the division between Creoles and Protectorate peoples lay in organized leadership:

The people have got to be convinced that leadership or no leadership this matter of the shortage of local foodstuffs is the offspring of a new time in our history - a time of transition it has got to be tackled by them⁶⁸

Mid 1918 did not improve the situation; food prices continued to rise and early heavy rains threatened to affect the rice harvest: the 'up country' farmers had little time to burn the bushes for the sowing season. Influenza was on the way. The outlook for 1919 was indeed gloomy.⁶⁹ By the end of 1918, when the idea of a West African Conference was being widely discussed in the press, the Weekly News lost no time in going straight into the economics of the agitation:

.... the main plank in the programme for discussion are taxation and representation, equality of opportunity, and a West African University. Although suggestions for the programme have not yet been exchanged by the different Committees, it is highly probable that these subjects will be prominent features of the discussions. Nevertheless, the protection of the economic interests of the native is a subject that will be second to none in importance. Nothing has done more to stimulate the Conference movement than the menacing campaign of the Empire Resources Development Committee. No more effective instrument than the Conference could be found by which to meet the astounding proposal that the Imperial Government should establish a monopoly of the palm oil and other vegetable products of British West Africa as a means of helping to pay for the war. Then again the Palm Kernel Export Duty Ordinance, which will depress the price paid to the native producers and correspondingly favour British consumers, will certainly call for close examination.⁷⁰

68. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 24/2/1917, p. 8.

69. Ibid., 11/5/1918, p. 9.

70. Ibid., 7/12/1918, p. 9: "The Programme For the British West African Conference" (my emphasis). Allan McPhee wrote of the export duties: "The duties were spread over the staple articles of export, such as palm oil, cocoa, groundnuts, palm kernels, palm kernel oil, and hides and skins in the Colony of Nigeria. The duties have been universally condemned in theory. Even the
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In Nigeria too, prices rose, especially in Lagos; prices of meat and 'gari' went up. One editorial referred to 'the abnormal rise in the price of Gari' and concluded that it was the 'working class' who were hardest hit.⁷¹ In the Eastern Provinces and Calabar yams also rocketed in price; this, according to the Pioneer was due to the fact that dislike of paper currency had led

70. Contd.] officials do not defend them as being good measures ... much of what the merchants allege against export duties could be truthfully urged against every species of taxation, that it hinders trade, There remains, however, the valid objection that a tax on raw material is more hampering to trade than a tax on a finished product" The duties were passed in the British West African legislatures "without the assistance of the Government majority in Nigeria, while in the Gold Coast all the unofficial members unanimously voted against it". McPhee further observed: "Whether it is wise to institute Preference in a Crown Colony which does not have responsible government and therefore has it imposed on it from Downing Street, is another matter. At any rate, the British West African experiment was on an altogether different plane from the Preferences given by, say, Canada to England, which was noted in an assembly representing the people of the country, whose vote was a voluntary gesture. In the case of British West Africa, where the legislature is virtually a "packed" house, the imposition savoured a little of the "Old Colonial System", which is out of date in an age of Mandates" A. McPhee, op.cit., pp. 224-226. Sir Sydney Olivier, author of White Capital and Coloured Labour and several other books, was more outspoken in his criticism of the export duties imposed on the British West African colonies: see his article: "The Repartition of Africa" in Contemporary Review, vol. CXV, Jan.-June, 1919, pp. 15-22. If the agitation of the nationalists is seen in the light of what they saw as the constitutional consequences or implications of post-war economic policies pursued by the imperial government, then their demand for constitutional changes, "so as to give the people an effective voice in their affairs both in the Legislative and Municipal Governments", and their contention that "taxation goes with effective representation" becomes understandable. In fact, agitation for representative government for Sierra Leone can be traced to the 1850's.

71. The Nigerian Pioneer, 24/10/1919, p. 8.

many of the yam growers in the interior districts around Port Harcourt and Calabar to refuse to part with their stocks to the middlemen who bought up their produce for resale in a better market. The high prices offered for palm produce also tended to cause farmers in the Eastern Provinces to plant only enough for their own needs. In the Western Provinces, however, it was the cocoa farms, mostly owned by Lagosians, and the profitability of labour that caused rising food prices, for the labourer could now make a few shillings a week by carrying cocoa bags and then retiring to his village and cassava plot.⁷²

Although 1919 and the first half of 1920 witnessed a boom in trade in West Africa, the price inflation of 1919 also had its social and political effects. In the Gambia, 1919 was a good year commercially,⁷³ but rising prices caused some sporadic outbursts of looting and petty theft and led to a seamen's strike for better wages and to the formation of unions, notably the Gambia Native Defensive Union.⁷⁴ In Lagos, too, the high cost of living led to the formation, in September 1919, of the Nigerian Mechanics Union which by early 1920 claimed a membership of about 800. Its vice patron was Herbert Macaulay whom the Pioneer accused of using the railwaymen's strike of January 7th 1920 to support the Eleko's case and to enhance his political stature in Lagos.⁷⁵

72. Ibid., 21/5/1920, p. 8.

73. West Africa, 23/10/1920, p. 1335.

74. Camille Martin, op.cit., p. 53. Also Appendix 1 of the Address of His Excellency The Acting Governor to the Legislative Council, 17/12/1920: Gambia Legislative Council Minutes, 1914-1923, p. 6, C.O. 89/14.

75. See The Lagos Weekly Record, 31/1/1920.

1920-1921, the years of boom and slump,⁷⁶ had profound effects on West Africa. 1919 and part of 1920 were periods of unprecedented boom in West Africa. Europe's rush to replenish drove prices up, especially primary commodities. Gold Coast cocoa prices had risen gradually from 45/- per cwt. in 1910 to 130/- in the peak year 1919. The local producer did very well out of Accra cocoa as the periods of depression had been more than set off by his huge profits in boom periods. In the Gambia, 1920 was described as 'commercially, one of unprecedented prosperity locally'; groundnut prices rose from £10 per ton in 1914 to £50 per ton in 1920. In Sierra Leone and Nigeria the trend was similar. The boom collapsed when raw materials and foodstuffs which the lack of shipping had accumulated abroad during the war, began to arrive in Europe. In March 1920 prices began to fall and by 1922 were halved, the worst year being 1921. In West Africa, the small African trader and merchant, usually not very efficient and competing with the combines, was the first to succumb to the economic blizzard. Merchants went short of money for trading purposes because during the boom years most of them had committed themselves to the purchase of great quantities of manufactured goods at high prices; in 1921 their deliveries entered the markets in many cases surfeited with goods. They were unable to receive more goods because a large part of their profits had been paid to the Government in excess profits duty and income-tax. Had business been wisely conducted, these profits would have been sufficient to compensate

76. W.A. Lewis, op.cit., pp. 18-20.

for the largely increased capital required in the early part of 1920 when they were replacing their cheaper stocks on which these profits had been made by goods at much increased values; also, a wise decision by the banks not unduly to increase overdrafts or advances would probably have helped to cushion off some of the effects of the slump. The African customers of these merchants were also short of cash. Firstly, in the early part of 1920 the African traders knew that the goods being offered them were lower in price than later deliveries; secondly, as they did not know how safely to dispose of their paper currency, which had caused so much trouble since its introduction to West Africa in 1916, they bought much more largely than was necessary for their immediate trade requirements, so that the slump met them with considerable stock on their hands. The customers of these merchants in turn were unable to purchase even their average quantity of goods, as prices had fallen sharply between February 1920 and December 1920. Then the African producer got less for his produce, as railway freights and labour costs had risen; purchasing power was low, and the margin of expenses between buying prices in West Africa and selling prices in Liverpool was greatly increased.

The agitation for constitutional change and the appeal to nationalism increased in proportion to the scale of economic difficulties.⁷⁷ One correspondent, complaining about the problems

77. For a valuable discussion of the connection between economic interests and nationalism see Carleton J.H. Hayes: The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism (New York, 1948), Ch. VII: "Economic Factors in Nationalism", especially pp. 244-248 where he discusses how neo-mercantilism usually disturbs the balance between economic liberalism and liberal nationalism and leads to
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raised by the issue of paper currency and about the shortage of silver, believed that European merchants were hoarding the notes and charging high prices while "the wealth of the classes is oozing away The kings, chiefs, and all classes will soon be paupers." The people, he said, should wake up and protect themselves "from the wily manouvrrings of combined magnates".⁷⁸ Throughout British West Africa there was agitation against the issue of non-silver alloy in 1920-1921, and against the issue of Treasury Notes, particularly the notes whose introduction in 1916, because of the silver shortage in England, resulted in great loss to the West African trading community - European and African merchants alike. In 1920, however, the 1913 silver currency was changed; abnormally high price of silver, due to post-war conditions, made the cost of minting silver coinage for West Africa prohibitive. The West African Currency Board therefore decided to adopt, with the approval of the Secretary of State (and the protests of West African merchants) a coin of similar design to the West African silver coins but made of an alloy of brass, copper and other metals. It was the

77. Contd.] a more articulate form of nationalism which he calls 'integral nationalism'. Also Maurice Dobb: "'Super-Profit' and West Africa", The Plebs, Aug. 1927, vol. 19, pp. 256-260; Dobb's article sought to explain colonial nationalism from the Marxist viewpoint against the 'Economism' of the 'Empire Socialism' and 'Commonwealth of Nations' idealogues. Commenting on 'The real historic significance of colonial nationalism' he wrote: "Colonial nationalism has so far usually begun with the rise of a native bourgeoisie and native intelligentsia, who rely for support upon the peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and workers, on whom the chief burden of exploitation rests. The colonial bourgeoisie, however, only want freedom to develop their own colonial capitalism, and are soon likely to break off from the general movement and accept a few concessions from the Imperialists, particularly if the masses behind them push forward too strongly so as to frighten them...." p. 259.

78. The Gold Coast Leader, 31/1/1920, p. 4.

introduction of these coins which the N.C.B.W.A. and the nationalist press was protesting against. The issue of new currency notes was not popular either. The merchants found it difficult to issue currency notes to producers who preferred coin, which they could hoard.⁷⁹ Currency notes came to be referred to as "filthy lucre" and as unhygienic: not that these were the real reasons for the opposition. The fact was that most of the smaller African merchants and traders in competition with the European firms were not doing good business with their own people. Even the Nigerian Pioneer had to protest:

Though it is economically unsound to put in circulation coins so debased as the proposed non-silver alloy coins, nevertheless, the people have shown an anxiety to accept them, proportional to their detestation of the flimsy, easily destructible currency notes⁸⁰

A more radical newspaper observed:

We learn that the British West African Conference went further and required an assurance that whatever the medium of exchange introduced, the face value should be pound for pound in Britain as in the Dependencies. It is obvious that British West Africa will not stand for long the wrongs of a depreciated medium of exchange in addition to differential duties and inflated prices⁸¹

On the whole, the agitation in the press covered a very wide range of economic grievances. The interesting point is that throughout the discussion in the press between 1916 and 1920 about the formation of the N.C.B.W.A., economic issues were constantly juxtaposed with constitutional ones. For example, the Gold Coast

79. See Report of the West African Currency Board: Cd. 8372, Dec. 1916; Cd. 8883, Dec. 1917; Cmd. 15, Feb. 1919; Cmd. 475, Dec. 1919; Cmd. 1189, March, 1921.

80. The Nigerian Pioneer, 7/5/1920, p. 8.

81. The Gold Coast Leader, 21/8/1920, p. 4.

Leader, which was foremost in its advocacy of the Congress movement, sermonized in 1920, a propos the cocoa market:

We have had trouble already with the preferential Export Duty on Palm Kernels, and the complaint has been long and bitter throughout British West Africa; and on top of this comes the apparent manipulation of the cocoa market as well. If this is not a species of economic servitude, we do not know what is. The people of West Africa in our opinion should be free to trade in any market they please throughout the world The contrary attitude would mean in the long run our being reduced to conditions in which we shall lose every vestige of economic freedom, the prelude to loss of free political development and progress. We trust this matter will seriously engage the attention of the National Congress of British West Africa

To this radical newspaper, it was 'politics' that would lead West Africa from the kingdom of economic unfreedom into the kingdom of economic opportunity and well being. Economics was indeed the crux of the matter, but it was "the Constitution" that must first be secured: "All this", the editorial concluded, "leads up to one consideration and that a very important one, the great urgency for British West Africa to possess a Constitution capable of giving effect to the will of the people. That is the only remedy to the various ills that the West African political situation is exposed."⁸² In order to have some control over their economic affairs, they believed they ought to have some voice in a representative assembly to which half of them would be elected by the people - or by those among the people who mattered - and not nominated by a benevolent autocrat administering a system of indefinite tutelage. And to achieve this goal, they believed it was necessary to change the Crown Colony system - constitutionally. There was never at any

82. Ibid., 14/8/1920, p. 4.

time any question of radically altering the balance of economic forces wholly in favour of the African. That would have been unthinkable for a leadership brought up on Adam Smith, Locke and Mill. Like all good liberals, all they wanted was mutual accommodation of interests, equal opportunity and 'an effective voice in their affairs'.⁸³

When the Conference finally met at Accra in March 1920, therefore, its economic programme or rather, a statement of its economic grievances and aspirations, had already been agreed upon by the four territories concerned. Under the heading "Commercial Enterprise with Particular Reference to (a) The Scheme of the Empire Resources Development Committee; (b) Banking; (c) Shipping", the Conference which later resolved itself into the N.C.B.W.A. resolved:

1. That this Conference views with great disfavour the propaganda of the Empire Resources Development Committee with respect to the British West African Colonies, and is strongly of the opinion that the natural resources of the British West African Dependencies are not for the exploitation of the Concessionaires under State control.

Further, that it condemns any policy which would make such resources available for the liquidation of the Imperial War Debt or any part of it, and pledges itself by constitutional means to oppose strenuously any such policy

2. That this Conference, being of the opinion that Trade competition in the British West African Dependencies should be free from restriction, views with great dissatisfaction the passing of the Palm Kernels Export Duty Ordinance in the various British West African Dependencies

83. See the remarks by J.E. Casely Hayford in Report of the Proceedings of a Meeting held in London between the League of Nations Union and the Delegates of the National Congress of British West Africa (Electric Law Press Ltd., 1920), pp. 13-16. For the role of the 'depressed bourgeoisie' in the evolution of nationalism, and the attitudes of the various social classes towards the nation, see pp. 270 ff., ch. XV, Nationalism (R.I.I.A.; O.U.P., 1949).

3. That this Conference, being strongly convinced that the time has come for the co-operation of the peoples of the British West African Dependencies in promoting their economical development, recommends the consideration by the various Committees of the formation of a Corporation, to be known as the British West African Co-operative Association, under the Companies Acts, with powers, inter-alia, to found Banks, promote shipping facilities, establish Co-operative Stores, and produce buying centres, in such wise as to inspire and maintain a British West African Economical development.

Further, to ensure the object in view, this Conference pledges itself to educate the public opinion of the different communities, through their local Committees as to the raising of a substantial capital in the British West African Co-operative Association and subject to the rules, regulations and conditions of the Companies Acts.

Further, that the collection and banking of such sums shall be under the direction and control of such Committee provided that the aggregate sum collected is to be treated as one fund and directs that this suggestion be referred to the different Committees for their consideration and report at the first sitting of the proposed Congress of Africans of British West Africa.

4. That this Conference disapproves of the issue by the Currency Board of coins and notes of a different face value from coins and notes outside British West Africa, and desires to place on record its opinion of the unfairness of such discrimination

5. That, in view of the difficulties hereto experienced in the matter of space on British bottoms by legitimate African Traders and Shippers, this Conference welcomes competition in the shipping line with particular reference to the 'Black Star Line'.⁸⁴

84. Shipping difficulties after 1914 led to the emergence of interest groups in British West Africa to protect their trade. In 1919, for example, some Nigerian exporters formed the West African Federation of Native Shippers and Traders, and sent a delegate to London to see if shipping facilities could be improved. Its delegate, Sam H. Duncan, was also the author of a pamphlet Reconstruction: Self-Determination (1919) - J.S. Coleman, op.cit., p.458. The number of West African merchants and traders who bought shares in Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line is not known, but between 1920 and 1923 there was widespread interest in West Africa in Garvey's Pan-Negro commercial enterprise. In March 1920, the Rev. J.G. Campbell, one of the members of the Lagos Committee of the N.C.B.W.A., was approached on the subject of

7. That this Conference desires to record its deep sense of the importance of British West African Farmers retaining their interest in the land and in the crops thereof, and would welcome legislation on the same lines as the Sierra Leone 'Sama Law'

8. That this Conference condemns profiteering and the cornering of foodstuffs in any shape or form, and recommends Legislation in the several British West African Colonies to meet the evil.⁸⁵

By the time the Accra Conference ended, it was apparent to most contemporary observers that the Westernised intelligentsia of lawyers,

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84. Contd.] forming a branch of Garvey's U.N.I.A. in Lagos; while he disagreed with Garvey's politics, he found much to commend the commercial scheme of U.N.I.A. and recommended it to the Accra Conference - see Campbell's letter to the Editor, The Times of Nigeria, 13/5/1920, pp. 4-5. The Lagos elite agreed with Campbell's view of the economic possibilities of Garvey's U.N.I.A. In response to his views, the Times of Nigeria added on March 25th: "Our humble advice to the Hon. Marcus Garvey and other members of the great movement for Negro emancipation is that, so far as West Africans are concerned, what is needed is civilisation. Besides the Black Star Line (already in being) West Africa needs the establishment of Banks, Industries, Schools (normal and vocational), Colleges and an up to date University To talk of building up an Empire on the bases of ignorance and uncivilisation is but to contemplate the wildest of wildcat schemes". Commerce apart, the Congress also took interest in the Black Star Line because of alleged racial discrimination on the ships of Elder Dempster Lines; see resolution 6 of the Congress proceedings.
85. An obvious reference to the activities of foreign firms and Lebanese traders. Resolution 3 on the 'Syrian Question' referred to Lebanese traders as 'undesirables and a menace to the good Government of the land', and demanded their repatriation from West Africa. It is interesting to note that Herbert Macaulay's Nigerian National Democratic Party which was founded in 1923 and in Point xvi of its constitution endorsed the policies of the N.C.B.W.A., also paid some attention to economic matters. Point xiii of its constitution called for the introduction of "every reasonable scheme for the economic development of the natural resources of Nigeria by Government or Private enterprise so long as such development does not imply the exploitation of the Natives or their lands or their economic servitude". Point xiv pledged the party "to the policy of Free and Fair Trade in Nigeria ... [and] ... for the recognition of the principle of "live and let live" on the part of the European and all other Foreign Merchants and Traders in all commercial dealings with the Native Traders and Producers of Nigeria."

merchants and journalists which inaugurated the Congress movement was not merely an idealistic group with visions of West African unity and representative institutions, but also a group which saw its interests and 'mobility' in colonial society threatened and even obstructed by a system of rule which, they thought, did not sufficiently accommodate their interests and therefore had to be reformed. One widely read journal with Pan-coloured interests explained the 'economic basis' of the movement with rather uncharacteristic Marxian dialectic; after pointing out the exploitation and frustration inherent in Crown Colony rule it went on to argue as follows:

.... a moment arrives when Crown Colony government is no longer possible. Economic conditions become acute. The small Native trader is pushed out: his class disappears. The big combine, the "billion-dollar trust", on the one hand is opposed to the millions of propertyless wage slaves on the other. A class of intelligentsia is thrown up from below by the struggle, and they lead a revolt against conditions which are growingly intolerable. They confer and petition; they agitate and threaten. Under economic stress the political education of the masses makes great leaps. At a certain point a crisis is reached, not before many apparent crises have been averted and overcome. Then one of two things happens. Evolution makes a violent move forward (and is called revolution for its pains), or Government concedes an inch ... and remarks how easily fools are pacified. ⁸⁶

Sir William Geary, who gave much assistance to the Congress London delegation, believed that "The Congress was not an arena for seditious speeches against the Government There was no snarl of non-co-operators", and that "the Africans of the Congress are shrewd business men who recognise that Africans and Europeans have worked together in West Africa for mutual benefit and profit." The

86. Africa and Orient Review, Dec. 1920, pp. 39-42: "The West African Problem".

Africans, he said, needed European capital but were also entitled to an effective representation in the affairs of their country.⁸⁷ Even the most conservative observers did not fail to notice that economic hardship was partly responsible for the political unrest in West Africa. The African World Annual (another commercial journal) observed that 1920 was a memorable year in West Africa:

It (i.e. 1920) has seen the birth of much that is destined to effect permanent change; it has also witnessed the passing-away of an old order of things in the West African Colonies generally discontent was rife throughout the country in 1920's early months owing to the currency problem, the shortage of native foodstuffs, the high price of imported provisions and labour unrest from August 1921, and continuing with increasing strength through 1922, very important movements - political, educational and ethical - gradually came to birth under the cessation of ordinary interests. During the whole of last year (1922) this has been very marked indeed. Politically it has expressed itself on the part of the natives of West Africa in a very close and critical attention to all Government proposals; demands to have a share in electing the Legislative Councils; and the increasingly strong support being given to the National Congress of British West Africa by both chiefs and people.⁸⁸

West Africa, another organ of various commercial interests in West Africa, was quick to see the economics of the West African movement for political reform changing its attitude to the N.C.B.W.A. from lukewarm support in 1920 to a recognition of the necessity of political change after the slump; its editorial ran:

It would be foolish to deny that 1921 opens with conditions in West African countries, commercial, financial, and to a certain extent, political, very far from what could be wished for At the same time as disappointment in trade we have deep disappointment in politics (in the wider sense of that word, there must be few business men who do not

87. Sir William Geary to the Editor: "Political Reform in West Africa", West Africa, 8/1/1921, p. 1661.

88. See The African World Annual, 1920-21, p. 69, and 1922-23, p. 65. Emphasis mine.

realise that politics in this sense and commerce are inextricably connected) the British people must realise that the war has affected Africa as it has all other countries, and that political advance must be made. It may be that the system being applied to India - the central principle of which we take to be the setting apart of certain imperial and international matters and the dealing with these by one set of machinery, while other, more local, matters are dealt with in another way - will provide a model. We do not doubt that if this issue were threshed out fully and candidly with the West African National Congress delegation now here, lines of practicable progress would soon indicate themselves. This is why we have urged the necessity for a frank exchange of views between the delegation and our British West African commercial leaders....⁸⁹

In British West Africa, nationalist circles saw the question in very much the same light as West Africa, the only difference being that for them, the N.C.B.W.A. had been chosen by 'the people' as the instrument of their economic salvation. To take only a few examples: one editorial, after lamenting the destruction the slump had brought on many a West African trader and merchant, some of whom had jumped on the bandwagon of prosperity in early 1920, recommended that

.... the time has come when Africans should call a conference of prominent West Africans from the Gambia to Nigeria to consider the question of the depression in trade and the way out: but there need be no separate Conference. This is one of the duties for which the National Congress of British West Africa came into existence and this is a fitting opportunity to start work at once. We believe that one of the special subjects to be discussed in the Congress meeting to take place in Sierra Leone is the depression in trade as it affects the Africans and the way out It is evident that if we in Nigeria depend only on cocoa, palm oil, and kernel as our export produce, we shall be disappointed. There is plenty of work for the National Congress to do if we turn our attention to, will hasten our enfranchisement even quicker than the calculation of the most enthusiastic optimist no time should be wasted in calling together a meeting to consider this most vital and important subject, namely the

89. West Africa, 1/1/1921.

depression in trade Africans Rise up! Awake from
sleep! The hour is come⁹⁰

The indefatigable Rev. Patriarch J.G. Campbell urged his audience to buy shares in Garvey's Black Star Line so as to avoid the shipping bottleneck and get goods at a cheaper freight rate from Canada and the United States. He concluded his political sermon:

It should not surprise our reader if we speak of the Dulness of trade. For trade affects both the Government, the Clergy and the Farmer; in fact all and every one: there ought to be some substantial trade combinations amongst us the Educated Africans. Individual efforts can do but very little in the face of combined efforts of the Europeans. The National Congress of British West Africa stands for trade combination amongst Africans; the work of Congress is not only politics, but it concerns different branches of life in Africa⁹¹

Although they realised that political action was necessary as a means of expressing and redressing their economic grievances, the leaders of the N.C.B.W.A. did not, however, produce a coherent and realistic policy of economic reconstruction and co-operation in British West Africa. Their economic utopias never left the conference resolution stage. The lawyer-merchant class which formed the core of the leadership, and could have provided the capital for an embryo West African Co-operative Association and similar schemes, does not seem to have pursued the idea wholeheartedly. There was hardly anything 'national' about the 'economical development' this social class wanted; like most liberal democrats and bourgeois nationalists, they believed there was no inherent conflict between their interests and the interests of the people in whose name they claimed to speak - 'sons of the soil',

90. Times of Nigeria, 18/4/1921, p. 5: "The Recent Depression in Trade".

91. Ibid., 25/4/1921, p. 4.

as they called themselves. As long as their interests could be accommodated in a colonial structure within which they could exert some influence, the more idealistic aspects of their nationalism could safely be left to the pan-African visionaries. Liberty might well be one of the glories of the Pax Britannica, and none of these men would have denied its importance in the post-war world; the fact that impressed them most was that liberty contributed directly to economic activity and they defended it partly because it was a commercial asset of undoubted value. Yet, they do not seem to have realised the fundamental difficulty of reconciling their claim to this liberty with the system of indirect rule which had now become an imperial dogma. There was little room for them in that system. In the end, however, it was a characteristic British compromise that resolved the difficulty. It is not surprising, then, that with the introduction of elective institutions in 1922-1925, the N.C.B.W.A. reached its nadir, sustained only by the enthusiasm of a few idealists like Casely Hayford, Bankole-Bright, S.R. Wood and Kobina Sekyi. In Nigeria, the movement was almost non-existent after 1923.

Economic conditions improved very slowly from 1923 through 1929, the Gold Coast and Nigeria recovering more rapidly than the other colonies; but the effects of the 1920-21 slump were still visible. One newspaper complained in 1927 that there was no sign that the cloud of stagnation and depression had cleared; export prices were fluctuating and were showing a downward tendency; import

trade did not improve, and merchants were worried.⁹² Yet another paper complained of rising unemployment and hard times.⁹³ As in 1920, export duties caused a considerable furore in the press in the late 20s. A Gold Coast paper protested:

The taxation of exports is bad in principle and a serious violation of the laws of economics; it is practically a tax on capital, and the trouble is that this system of taxation handicaps the producer when he comes to sell his wares in the open market in competition with producers of other countries who have no export taxes to pay.⁹⁴

The necessity of agricultural banks and co-operative methods of production and marketing was widely discussed in the press during the 20s and 30s. One paper expressed universal opinion on the subject when it declared that 'combination and co-operation by and between West African traders and middlemen seem to us the only panacea for stemming the rapid current of declension and threatened extinction of West African traders'.⁹⁵ Duse Mohamed Ali, however, who was by then an expert on the West African economy and on the methods of modern business, would have none of the wailing and heated debate about the monopoly of European firms and about the depression; self-help and organisation, he said, must be the watchwords of the African:

The lack of unity among Nigerians is absolutely appalling. Here is a rich country hungering for collective effort to make its people independent and those who have the capacity to

92. The West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 27/4/1927.

93. The Sierra Leone Weekly News, 30/6/1928.

94. The Gold Coast Independent, 29/9/1923.

95. The West African Mail and Trade Gazette, 28/3/1925.

help in the needful organisation stand around whining about depression as though they possessed a monopoly in that objectionable adjunct to post-war civilization Obviously co-operative marketing is the real solution of the cocoa problem in Nigeria as well as in the Gold Coast.⁹⁶

With the exception of the fairly good years 1934-35, there was no relief from the depression which began in 1929 and lasted through the outbreak of World War II. Surprisingly enough, there was no serious social or political unrest, although hundreds were unemployed in the towns, particularly the clerkly class who were always the first victims of entrenchment. There were radical protest groups like I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson's West African Youth League and the Nigerian Youth Movement, as well as demonstrations and strikes in Freetown, Sierra Leone (1926 and 1931) and in Bathurst, Gambia (1929), but as long as these movements, particularly the youth movements, were not supported by the middle-class moderate leadership,⁹⁷ they merely flourished briefly, and even wrested political control of some urban councils from the old guard of City Fathers, as happened in Lagos, Accra and Freetown in the 1930s, but never became national movements with a comprehensive programme. These movements led by dissatisfied 'young men' encountered the open hostility of the old nationalist group;

96. The Comet, 21/10/1933.

97. According to George Padmore, unemployment, taxation and re-trenchment had driven the unemployed in the towns into the hands of "the petty-bourgeois, especially the "Left" leaders of the West African National Congress In this way the thousands of unemployed workers and agricultural labourers are being brought under the influence of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Every move on the part of the petty-bourgeoisie to-day is made in order to subordinate the growing proletarian mass movement to their own class interests." The Communist International, vol. VIII, No.13, July 1st 1931: "The Agrarian Crisis in British West Africa".

in Freetown, middle class Creole nationalists of the Congress stamp like Bankole-Bright and Beoku-Betts made it clear that they would have none of Wallace-Johnson's new radicalism; in Accra, where Wallace-Johnson founded the Youth League before retiring to Freetown, the Youth Movement (led by Wallace-Johnson, Kojo Thompson and Azikiwe) supported the Mambii Party against older and more conservative nationalists like Dr. F.V. Nanka-Bruce; in Lagos, the story was similar: Azikiwe's West African Pilot backed the N.Y.M., formed in 1938 and led by Dr. Akinola Maja, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli and Dr. Abayomi, against Herbert Macaulay's N.N.D.P. which had dominated Lagos politics since its foundation in 1923.⁹⁸

The rivalry between the N.Y.M. and the N.N.D.P. is illustrated in a lengthy 30-page electioneering speech by Dr. C.C. Adeniyi-Jones, President of the N.N.D.P., attacking the leadership of the N.Y.M. By 1938, the N.N.D.P. was on the defensive, having lost three seats to the new movement which had rudely challenged its supremacy in Lagos politics. It was further weakened when another dissatisfied splinter-group, the Young Democrats, led by Ayo Williams detached themselves from it. Dr. Adeniyi-Jones, himself a Nigerian of Sierra Leone extraction, complained of the walk-outs staged by N.Y.M. members of the Lagos Town Council and of their "policy of unwarrantable aggressiveness" during elections. To him, the method of agitation of the N.Y.M. resembled those of the Hitler Youth Movement, not the good old colonial style politics:

.... Youth we are told is impetuous Bear constantly in mind that evolution is a gradual process, and that when

98. See T.N. Tamuno: Nigeria and Elective Representation (Heinemann, 1966), p. 51 ff.

people are too much in a hurry, chaos is more often the result than progress What do we see to-day? A hot-headed political party, with a tendency amongst the Executive of this new Organisation towards aggressive measures crying themselves hoarse in their frenzied parochialism of "Nigeria for the Nigerians".

The N.Y.M., he said, was opposing "individuals who for years have been carrying the lamp of political progress as brightly as can be expected under conditions such as obtain in a dependency with Crown Colony Administration".⁹⁹ Herbert Macaulay also fulminated, in typical style, against "This mixed pickle group of Nigerian Youth and middle-aged men composed as it is of a medley of irresponsible political Tyros who have suddenly been stricken by the introsusception (sic) of crinkum-crankum ideas of modern European revolutionary politics", whose "pretentious 'endeavour to break down tribal prejudices' may be nothing short of a camouflage of the sinister object of mobilizing a united mass of the unsophisticated natives of the hinterland provinces, with whose support they might be able to achieve the goal of their political activities, namely:- 'a complete taking-over of the Government of Nigeria into the hands of the indigenous people of our country'..."¹⁰⁰ Mass politics with self-government as its goal, was in Macaulay's view, incompatible with politics as the leadership 'carrying the lamp of political progress' saw it.

In the Gold Coast, where the Youth League was formed in 1936, the Government's sedition laws and the opposition of the conservative nationalists compelled Wallace-Johnson to retreat to Freetown where

99. Election Speech by Dr. C.C. Adeniyi-Jones (n.d.), Macaulay Mss., IV, 15, pp. 15-19.

100. The West African Pilot, 14/6/1938, p. 6.

he founded branches of the League in Freetown and Bo. In Accra, the League was regarded by the conservatives as a body of dangerous agitators and its organising secretary Wallace-Johnson was singled out as an agitator who had no business in Gold Coast affairs. Azikiwe, however, thought differently, warning the conservative critics that "unless there is an organisation which would create a feeling of oneness, professions of patriotism or nationalism are figments of the imagination. The conference idea should be a dynamic process to the activities of the various delegates who should stand fast and support the ideals of this worthwhile organisation in the history of African nationalism."¹⁰¹

Back in Sierra Leone, Wallace-Johnson's Youth League, with The Sentinel as its organ, agitated against labour conditions and the Education Ordinance, and like its counterpart in Nigeria, got involved in local politics, contesting and winning the November municipal elections in Freetown in 1938.¹⁰² Azikiwe, who had followed the elections, echoed the growing dissatisfaction with the bourgeois nationalists of the 20s:

Most of those who are the self-professed leaders of the various sections of West Africa are, in reality, and with all due deference to them, worthy of one piece of job, that is, to commit felo-de se. In Sierra Leone one finds intelligent looking leaders pussy-footing with their hats in hands, presenting their petition to His Most Excellent Governor reminding His Most Excellent Majesty that Her Most Excellent Majesty regarded Sierra Leone as the Most Ancient and Loyal Colony of Uncle Toms. Is there any wonder that the youth of Sierra Leone are stifled and are made to be subservient to persons who have no pretensions whatsoever to leadership? ... Renascent Africans the era of ciphers and Uncle Toms

101. The African Morning Post, 21/3/1936, p. 4.

102. For details of this election see The West African Pilot, "Freetown Politics", 15/11/1938.

is in transition. The days of hat-in-hand-me-too-boss political scavengers are numbered.¹⁰³

Colonial politics in West Africa, according to Azikiwe, was already in transition, and the old colonial, missionary educated lawyer class was being challenged by the angry young men of the 30s. It was therefore, "with the most excellent delight" that Wallace-Johnson in 1938 announced the "welcomed and timely demise of the Society of City Fathers and Uncle Toms as represented in the fall of Brah-ism and the triumph of Youth at the Polling Stations of the City Council"¹⁰⁴ The electoral successes of the youth movements, however, as we have argued, failed to dislodge the conservatives from their leadership and, in spite of chronic economic conditions, never commanded a wide following. It is not correct to argue, therefore, as some writers have tended to do,¹⁰⁵ that a new and radical leadership emerged after the 1930s as a result of the failure of the moderates and conservatives of the 20s. That they were dissatisfied with the old leadership is clear enough; but the notion that their approach to nationalist politics constituted a radical departure will not bear examination. A closer look at the social and professional composition of the political leadership during this alleged change shows that from the 20s of the Congress movement to the foundation of the United Gold Coast Convention in 1947, the leadership was still predominantly middle class and conservative.¹⁰⁶ And J.B. Danquah's views

103. Ibid., 15/11/1936, p. 4.

104. Ibid., 22/11/1938, p.7.

105. E.G.A.G. Hopkins, op.cit., p. 152.

106. P. Garigue, op.cit., pp. 295-303; for Azikiwe's comments on the Congress leadership see The West African Pilot, 4/7/1938, p. 3.

in Self Help, far from being revolutionary or socialistic, are characteristic of liberal nationalism.

In general, the discontent of the depression years found expression principally in a widely shared desire for greater economic co-operation among West Africans.¹⁰⁷ It became fashionable for every newspaper to deal with 'the economic problem' and to pontificate on the virtues of economic self help and co-operation, and pieces of advice like: 'economic and industrial independence is a necessary step to our political freedom',¹⁰⁸ were commonplace. With this went the tendency among nationalists to lament the ruin or disappearance of the African merchant and trader. Very often this was ascribed to the monopolistic practices of the European firms. For example, one Gold Coast newspaper covering the Third Session of the N.C.B.W.A. in Bathurst, alleged that the three British firms in Bathurst had 'squeezed out' nearly all the Gambian merchants. The same paper made this observation on nationalist politics and economic competition at the beginning of the Third Session of Congress:

.... it is possible to secure that balance between local conservations and modern economic aggression typified by restless governmental policy. If it is true that the policy of the Colonial Office with respect to British West Africa as a whole is one and the same; if business men are directing their energies into the same channels guided by the same considerations throughout West Africa, then it stands to reason that the peoples of British West Africa must also think together. And that this is the essential principle upon which the Congress movement is founded cannot be too often

107. See Casely Hayford's speeches at the Second, Third and Fourth Sessions of the N.C.B.W.A., reproduced in Magnus Sampson's West African Leadership (A.H. Stockwell, Ltd., 1949), pp. 75, 79-80, 89.

108. Vox Populi, 23/4/1932.

emphasised The economic development of British West Africa and the means by which the indigenes may come in for their proper substantial share of the benefits is one of the problems of West Africa to which practical minds must address themselves. Not all our political propaganda is going to help us much unless we can command a fair share of the wealth of our own country. That is a practical conclusion as clear as daylight and we trust Congress will not fail to give attention to the matter.¹⁰⁹

J.M. Stuart-Young, an 'old Coaster' and an Englishman who had witnessed the peaceful days before the arrival of the combine, made a similar observation in a circular addressed to political and commercial groups in Lagos when he complained in 1930 about "the strangle-hold the Merger and BIG CONCERNS have on the River", and invited the West African Co-Operative Producers Ltd. (formed by Winifred Tete Ansa in Accra between 1925 and 1928)¹¹⁰ to establish a branch at Onitsha:

I am positive that the moment an Agency was established here, and powers were offered for shipments by the Natives (instead of local sales at ruled prices of the Merger) there would be such a rallying to your standard as you would find more than gratifying. Today in the whole of this Province (i.e. Onitsha) there is not ONE African shipper; whereas, in pre-war years, and war years, there were at least a dozen from Onitsha, I myself always averaged some 1,000 casks of oil and 13,000 bags (roughly a thousand tons) of kernels a year. Today I am nobody. Today all the Natives are held under the vice-like grip of the Merger, and other BIG firms, who are willing (in their own interests) to play the Merger Game.¹¹¹

Stuart-Young also observed that between 1910 and 1919 "there were

109. The Gold Coast Leader, 7/11/1925: "The Third Session of Congress".

110. For the significance of Tete-Ansa's West African Co-Operative Producers Ltd. and other commercial organisations in West African nationalist politics in the inter-war period, see A.G. Hopkins, op.cit., pp. 133-152.

111. Circular by J.M. Stuart-Young, Onitsha, to the West African Co-Operative Producers Ltd., Lagos, 11/3/1930: Macaulay Papers, III, 9: 1930, General Correspondence.

only FIVE European Concerns" and "around a dozen HEALTHY and SOUND Native Traders, mainly Sierra Leoneans and Lagosians", but that "since the Armistice (reaping what they have not sown) other 'Merger Associated' firms have come here (Walkdens, Trading Assoc. of Nigeria, African and Eastern, Welsh's etc.)." "As to the African Community", he concluded, "not a SINGLE ONE HAS SHIPPED for years! They are all bound to sell locally - and it is from THEM that the firms buy the cask (wholesale) I have tried to tell you the facts - now weigh them up, and save the River from becoming the Cemetery of the Native Trader, and the Garden of the Merger and the Merger's Fellow-Conspirators".¹¹² A similar view was expressed by a leading Gambian merchant of considerable business ability and experience. This merchant, Henry M. Jones, had succeeded to his father's business and continued it until the sudden slump in 1920-21. Now he too was in the Congress movement, was "in touch with all leading European political ideas", was closely following Macaulay's association with Tete-Ansa's Nigerian Mercantile Bank (which had succeeded the Industrial and Commercial Bank) and was interested in 'Finance, Commerce, and Politics'.¹¹³

In the cocoa industry too, discontent was expressed in the

112. Ibid.

113. Henry M. Jones to Herbert Macaulay, 11/8/1931: Macaulay Papers, IV, 35, pp. 14-15. It is regretted that the business papers of the late 'Pa' Jones (he died in 1965) were not available to the author when he was in Bathurst on research in 1966. Access to such papers may well reveal a complex network of relations between various West African merchants and political bodies in West Africa during the inter-war period. Until such papers are available, however, we shall have to depend on current research by economic historians.

form of hold ups and attempts to create African owned combines and co-operatives.¹¹⁴ A.J. Ocansey, an Accra cocoa merchant who was associated with Tete-Ansa's West African Co-Operative Producers Ltd., had discussed the idea of a Cocoa Federation for the Gold Coast and Ashanti with Herbert Macaulay during the depression years. He had also discussed it with various Paramount chiefs, sub-chiefs and cocoa farmers at Nsawam and had sent a copy of the resolutions passed at that meeting to Macaulay, urging him to show them "to all whom the matter of unity in respect of the cocoa industry may concern", and to "establish a similar movement in Nigeria, suggesting the name 'The Nigerian Cocoa Federation'." Ocansey added: "I must again emphasise the fact that the movement has secured the approval of all, and at present, not a single bean of cocoa is being sold to any firm. The European firms are feeling the effect of resistance so much so (sic), that from the 21st instant to the time of my writing, the price of cocoa has risen from 10/6 to 15/- at Nsawam I feel that unless we stand up and fight for our rights, the end will find us in economic

114. George Padmore, who was at the time closely following the 'revolutionary movement' in the colonies, wrote in 1931: "This system of indirect business relationship between the imperialists and the peasants of the interior has contributed to the creation of a class of West African petty-bourgeois traders, who have recently begun to organise co-operative market agencies, as well as a bank (the Industrial and Commercial Bank of West Africa) in order to compete with the foreign wholesale merchants who, they realise, are ruthlessly exploiting the peasantry through monopoly and pool purchasing. This represents the first open economic struggle on an organised scale, between the Native trading capitalists and the foreign imperialists": "The Agrarian Crisis in British West Africa", The Communist International, vol. VIII, No. 13, July 1st 1931, p. 370.

slavery."¹¹⁵ Ocansey's and John Ayew's Gold Coast and Ashanti Cocoa Federation was formed "for the protection of the cocoa industry generally having reference particularly to control of the output of the crop and improvement of quality and price", but the hold up, designed to force prices up, failed, and the cocoa farmers sought the assistance of a more realistic and imaginative business man, Tete-Ansa, who advised them to form their own co-operative backed by their own banks.¹¹⁶

Winifred Tete-Ansa himself was one of the very few West African business men who was realistic enough to grasp the importance of co-operatives and banking in the struggle for economic reconstruction and in the struggle against the combines, within the imperial framework. To this end, he founded the West African Co-operative Producers (1925-28) to which we referred earlier, the Industrial and Commercial Bank Ltd. (1924), and the West African American Corporation (1930).¹¹⁷ The last named body was incorporated in the State of Delaware, U.S.A., with an authorised capital of 1,000,000 dollars composed of ten 7% cumulative preference shares of \$100 each (par value) and 100,000 ordinary shares of no par value. Among its officers were H.D. Van Sinderen (President and Chairman of the Board of Directors), H.M. Daugherty (Vice President), W. Tete-Ansa (Deputy Vice President), J.B. Beaty (Secretary and Treasurer), and G.E. Biscaye. Like its predecessor,

115. A.J. Ocansey to Herbert Macaulay, 27/10/1930; Macaulay Papers, III, 9: 1930; General Correspondence.

116. See A.G. Hopkins, *op.cit.*, pp. 148-149.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 138 ff.

the Akim Trading Company (also incorporated in the U.S.A. by another Gold Coast business man, Chief Alfred Sam in 1912), the West African American Corporation was conceived as a pan-Negro commercial venture which would benefit the exploited groups on both sides of the Atlantic. Its office was at 19, West 44th Street, New York City, and it was "understood that business in its shares is conducted among the Negro population in the Harlem Quarter of New York".¹¹⁸ It dealt mostly in cocoa, and its American representatives in Accra and Lagos, Mr. Daugherty and Mr. Macpherson, bought cocoa on a commission basis i.e. on an instalment basis to the grower. It was estimated that the Corporation, which was affiliated to West African Producers Ltd., had a capital of \$1,000,000 of which \$70,000 had been sunk in West African interests, and that it was backed by the firm of Messrs. C. Tennant and Sons of London.¹¹⁹ The Corporation was also inextricably connected with Tete-Ansa's other concerns and with banks in Britain. It was also connected with E.F. Small's Gambia Co-operative Marketing Association, with which we shall deal later. Small's co-operative in turn was connected with Messrs. C. Tennant & Co. Ltd., headed by Lord Glenconner, which the West African American Corporation described as "our affiliate in Farmers Co-

118. Gambia Confidential, No. D.C.S. 15/31/24, 3/194, File No. 1466: G.A.S. Northcot, Colonial Secretary Accra, to the Hon. Colonial Secretary, Bathurst, 28/7/1931. Gambia Records Office.

119. Ibid., para 2 and 8, No. 1866/11, C.W. Duncan, Inspector-General of Police to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, 27/6/1931.

operative foreign offices".¹²⁰ The Corporation, however, like all the enterprises Tete-Ansa had founded, came to grief: in fact, it did very little business and Tete-Ansa, despite his efforts, never became what The African World called him - 'the commercial wizard of West Africa'.

Unlike Tete-Ansa, E.F. Small of the Gambia was one of the leading figures in the N.C.B.W.A., and throughout his political career remained a trade unionist and Pan-Africanist. He was the founder of the co-operative movement in the Gambia and was a prominent political figure in the 30s and 40s. He entered commercial politics and trade unionism via agitation and nationalist politics and, in spite of the administration's suspicion that he was a subversive and an agitator, by the time he died had laid the foundations of a trade union and co-operative movement in the Gambia. Significantly, it was during the depression years that he tried to start a local co-operatives movement. He saw the co-operative marketing of groundnuts in Europe as an alternative to the ordinary method of selling groundnuts to the established local firms. The attitude of the administration, however, was not encouraging; for while it recognized the importance of the groundnut industry to the country, it felt (confusing Small's enterprise with 'politics') that it was "not possible to regulate in time of peace, such matters as the prices of products and the freight rate charged on ocean-going steamers", and that it would "be impracticable to

120. H.M. Danquah and H.M. Daugherty to H.E. the Governor of the Gambia, 27/4/1931, *ibid.* For an official account of Tete-Ansa's career and the West African American Corporation see Gambia 3/194, File No. 1466. G.R.O.

assist any one section of the community at the expense of the others"121

With the European firms virtually monopolising the market, and the administration negatively acting as economic umpire, any self-help movement "... to get the people of the Gambia mutually associated for the economical improvement of the Gambia"122 was bound to be a frustrating business. Small was certain that if he succeeded in getting commercial firms in England to back him and put their buying agents in four or five buying stations in the Protectorate, he would successfully oppose the dominance of the Chamber of Commerce. For, as a contemporary of his reminds us, "The Chamber of Commerce then was the mortal enemy of any other commercial branch in Gambia, whether by private persons or the organisation of the citizens".123 Small's co-operative movement, however, only began to bear fruit in the early 1950s, after a chequered career in the 30s and 40s: "Mr.Small failed mainly because the Government was not prepared to give the necessary aid, and the Co-Operative project had no finance, material, and adequate staff to stand a strong opposition against the Chamber of Commerce".124 Yet, if there were any 'practical minds' (as the nationalist press used to describe those concerned

121. B.A. Finn, Acting Colonial Secretary, to E.F. Small, 18/6/1930, Gambia Co-Operative Department, File No. R.C.S./EDU/12.

122. Ibid., Mr. Babou B. Kebbeh interviewed by students on co-operative course project "Historical Research: Co-Operation in Gambia", 1960.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.

about economic questions) among the Congress nationalists, E.F. Small was assuredly one of them. Bourgeois nationalism, however, never succeeded in penetrating the core of the problem: it was the generation of West African nationalists, which, after 1945, was to make more explicit the fundamental opposition between alien rule and the political and economic interests of the people as a whole. The paradox is that they too, like the moderates before them, had to 'seek the political kingdom' first before settling the less glamorous but more important question of economic freedom. The 'dialectics of backwardness',¹²⁵ was such that the nationalist leaders had to start from the super structure,

125. For the significance of this phenomenon in the Leninist theory of modern nationalism in colonial countries, see Ch. 12 of A.G. Meyer's brilliant Leninism: "An entirely new conception about the preconditions for a "proletarian" revolution emerges. The old ideas about the maturity of social and economic conditions make no more sense when applied to individual countries with the new Leninist theory, the aim of the "proletarian" revolution is not to destroy capitalist industry nor to seize it but to create adequate means of production in those areas of the world which lacked them. Its aim is economic construction for the sake of national emancipation, and this could be accomplished only through the use of political, ideological, in short "super-structural" means. In Western Europe, industrialism developed organically and spontaneously. Having grown up there, it becomes a political goal for every nation in which it has not developed naturally, all ideas about "economic determinism" notwithstanding Political action determines economic development" A.G. Meyer: Leninism (Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 271-272. Note that "proletarian" refers to the masses in pre-industrial colonies and semi-colonies; the 'stages' of development Marx postulated are jettisoned in the Leninist theory. In the Leninist theory, the liberation movement is organised by a highly centralised and 'national' party which may be led by bourgeois nationalists - at least initially.

not the economic basis, in order to lead the people from the kingdom of necessity into that of freedom. And the argument between younger nationalists like Danquah and Azikiwe and the Congress moderates was not so much a question as to whether economic development and co-operation were important in the struggle for freedom, as to whether the nationalisation of economic development (nationalism in one country, or "Nigeria for the Nigerians" as the Nigerian Youth Movement put it) was preferable to pan-African co-operation at that stage. The debate is still of seminal importance in the politics of the Third World.

We have attempted in this chapter to outline chronologically and as far as our material allows, a wide range of economic grievances which commercial and nationalist groups in British West Africa were convinced lay at the back of their discontent and their dissatisfaction with the old Crown Colony system of rule which, they felt, needed to be brought into line with representative institutions so as to take account of their interests. We have also endeavoured to give the 'feel' of nationalist thought and politics so far as this concerned post-war economic conditions, for no account of the economics of nationalism is complete without reference to the opinions of those who, rightly or wrongly, saw themselves as the representatives of the people. Historians are coming more and more to recognise the importance of the inter-war period in the economic and political history of British West Africa. For not only did this period witness the beginning of the 'economic revolution'; it also witnessed the emergence of a more articulate

and coherent, albeit moderate and liberal nationalism, as well as the formative stages of the constitutional evolution that was to take place in British West Africa after 1945. The close of the period under review also saw the dissatisfaction of the younger generation of nationalists, notably I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, Nnamdi Azikiwe and the leaders of the Nigerian Youth Movement, with the old style of nationalist politics of the 20s and with the failure of the moderates of the 20s to involve themselves in grass-roots politics and realistic economic reconstruction.¹²⁶ Yet, the first clash with the Crown Colony system after 1919 could be seen as a turning point in the evolution of representative institutions in British West Africa; in the process, the argument between the colonial administration and the West African bourgeois nationalists became inextricably bound with racial, constitutional and economic questions.¹²⁷ The clash resulted neither in a fundamental alteration of the colonial system nor in any limitation of the

126. A.G. Hopkins, op.cit., pp. 150-152.

127. "Economic nationalism is a wide term of somewhat vague meaning but, in this instance, it should be taken to denote an approach to economic problems influenced by racial and political sentiments. That is to say, the press rarely, if ever viewed economic affairs with the coldly dispassionate disinterest of the pure economist but frequently allowed nationalist feeling to mingle with and influence, not to say distort, economic judgement. This fact is, perhaps, best illustrated by reference to the attitude of the press to monopolistic enterprises such as combines, rings, cartels, mergers and pools To such commercial formations the entire press in British West Africa was most violently opposed during the years of slump reaching a furious climax during the Gold Coast cocoa holdup of 1937. Rings and combines were frequently attacked as being economically unfair and dangerous but there was also the nationalist aspect of the attack which sought to represent such commercial constructions as the special instrument of white men expressly designed to crush and subdue the negro...." W.D. Edmonds: The Newspaper Press in British West Africa 1918 to 1939 (Bristol University M.A. thesis, 1951-52), pp. 249-250.

economic dominance of the European interests, but in a constitutional compromise, the first of its kind in Britain's African colonies, which conceded some responsibility to this political leadership and, to a limited extent, accommodated their interest and allowed them some mobility within the existing system.

The pan-West African movement of the 1920s was indeed influenced partly by Wilsonian idealism and partly by the growth of pan-movements after the War, especially the Pan-Negro movements of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, and West African nationalism during this period can be interpreted in this pan-African context.¹²⁹ At the same time, there is much truth in Professor Gellner's argument that 'Men do not in general become nationalists from sentiment or sentimentality, atavistic or not, well-based or myth-founded: they become nationalists through genuine, objective, practical necessity, however obscurely recognised'.¹²⁸ It is these 'obscurely recognised' social and economic factors in the history of the nationalism of this period that we have attempted to outline and explain, and to show how Pan-African ideology and nationalist rhetoric were brought to bear on the questions of the day.

128. Ernest Gellner: Thought and Change (London, 1964), p. 160, quoted in K.R. Minogue: Nationalism (B.T. Batsford Ltd., London 1967), p. 152.

129. T. Kerstrens, for example, sees the N.C.B.W.A. as 'a kind of regional branch in Africa itself of the Pan-African movement...' The New Elite in Asia and Africa (Praeger Special Studies in International Economics and Development, 1966), p. 124.

CHAPTER VI

A PAN-AFRICAN PRESSURE-GROUP IN LONDON: 1920-1921

By October 1920, all the N.C.B.W.A. delegates had gathered in London for their important campaign in the metropolis; some of the delegates, like T. Hutton-Mills and H.M. Jones, who were businessmen as well, had arrived earlier and were transacting various businesses before the lobbying started. Perhaps it is because the delegation failed that historians have tended to pay little attention to the details of its elaborate and fascinating pressure-group campaign in London. In retrospect, however, the methods employed in 1920-21 did not differ substantially from those of the N.C.N.C. delegation in 1947,¹ though the objectives and the leadership of the latter delegation were different.

In December 1920 the London Times announced the existence of the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. with the caption: 'Home Rule for West Africa: Natives Appeal to the Colonial Office';² while the African Society favourably commented on its aims and problems, it could not help commenting on the black Edwardians of West Africa:

The inauguration of the British West African Congress tends to show that West Africa should no longer be regarded as composed of separate colonies but as one self-conscious and articulate community. There are some respects in which the West African might with advantage, express his new sense of racial consciousness. At present, the educated West African is too ready to Europeanise himself It is a pity that West Africans have so freely adopted European names. If the Aga Khan writes to the Times on behalf of his

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1. PAN-AFRICA, vol. 1, Nos. 10-12, Oct.-Dec., 1947, pp. 1-14:
'We Glance Back - The N.C.N.C. in Perspective'.
 2. The Times, 16/12/1920, p. 11.

fellow Muhammedans, the most ignorant Englishman who reads the letter realises from the signature that the Aga Khan presumably knows what he is talking about. But those who read in the newspapers to-day that Mr. Casely Hayford and Mr. Hutton-Mills advocate changes in the West African constitution Englishmen show their bad taste in their costume, and many West Africans show that they too, have bad taste in copying it Now that West Africa is demanding a voice in its own affairs, might it not with advantage devise a culture of its own, a culture in which everything European eminently suited to West Africa should be adopted, but in which top-hats, Paris frocks and English patronymics should have no place?

The gentlemen of the Congress, however, unaware that the legacy they inherited, had now disqualified them, in the eyes of the colonial administration, from assuming leadership of the masses, resolutely went on with their campaign for elective representation.

As early as September 1920, H.M. Jones, one of the Gambian delegates who was already in London, had submitted a rough plan of action to an ad hoc committee of the London delegation - which was awaiting the arrival of Casely Hayford. In it he optimistically observed

In so far as I could judge the political atmosphere of England at the present time, it does not appear to me that we shall meet with any great opposition or difficulty in

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3. Journal of the African Society, vol. XX, 1920-21, p. 142 ff.
 Oba Samuel Akinsanya, the Odemo of Ishara, who was born in 1898 and was active in the Nigerian Youth Movement of the 1930's, tells us that they 'dressed like Edwardian dandies': 'How did high society live then? Oh, it was a really posh society. It was the tail end of the Victoria era and the sophisticated people were very smooth and elegant. Women went out in long skirts; they wore big corsets and their busts were padded high up; they wore elegant hats with feathers and they had gloves in their hands with chic umbrellas. The men wore high collars and top coats.... Those were the days. Then came the age of King Edward and people wore beard because King Edward had a beard and a big moustache..... In those days there was no nation. We were subject races; we were living under the influence of British Colonial people and we adopted their forms and their fashions....'
Spear, August, 1966, p. 9.

our demands; they are moderate, and the atmosphere is full of concessions.⁴

Jones thought that the propaganda of the London Committee was to be confined to

a. Interviews with Editors of Responsible journals like the Times, Manchester Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Morning Post, West Africa, African World.

b. Insertion of articles in the above journals; such articles to be moderate in tone and truthful in expression.

c. Interviews with members of the House of Lords and House of Commons.

d. Interviews with directors of leading Mercantile Houses and Banks, especially those operating along the Coast.

e. For the purposes of the Cause, all intercourse with the Press of the Labour Party should be eschewed as any intercourse or connection with them would prejudice our case in the eyes of the moderate element among politicians of all parties.

f. to interest the Editor of John Bull and get him to write a leader on the movement.⁵

The London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A., said Jones, should confine its lobbying to the plan he had outlined, and should attempt no more until their return home, and then prepare the ground for the next meeting of the N.C.B.W.A. Meanwhile, he had met Max Thompson, chairman of the African Progress Union in London, and had been told that the Union would co-operate with the London Committee. This was a moderate plan and as we shall see, most of it was adopted by the London Committee, although their involvement with the parliamentary Labour Party went beyond what they had intended.

4. Henry M. Jones to H.C. Bankole-Bright, Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, pp. 2-3, 2/9/1920.

5. Ibid.

Even before the delegation arrived in London, the African Progress Union⁶ had been in touch with the Congress leaders. Its secretary Robert Broadhurst wrote to Hutton-Mills in September 1920, asking him whether a meeting of the N.C.B.W.A. delegation due in London with the A.P.U. Committee could be arranged, as the A.P.U. Committee 'exists here for the sole purpose of advancing the welfare of Africans in every possible way'.⁷ Bankole-Bright, now secretary of the Congress London Committee replied that the delegates would be in London in September and would meet the A.P.U.⁸ On the same date (September 9th), the Anti-Slavery and

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6. The African Progress Union, an amalgamation of the Union of African Peoples and the Society of Peoples of African Origin, was founded in London in 1918; its original membership included the pan-Negro Dr. John Alcindor (a West Indian and a graduate of Edinburgh University) who became its president in 1921, T.J. Jackson of The Lagos Weekly Record, Duse Mohamed Ali, Robert Broadhurst of the Gold Coast, Max Thompson, and E.F. Fredericks of British Guiana who also attended the 1919 and 1921 Pan-African Congresses and later became a member of the Georgetown Legislative Council and chairman of the Negro Progress Convention in Georgetown. The Anti-Slavery papers at Rhodes House Library contain the constitution of the A.P.U. It was largely a student body of peoples of African descent and saw itself as a pan-Negro club linking Negro Americans with other African peoples. It established some rapport with the Pan-African Congresses and through Broadhurst and Hutchison, helped to propagate the aims of the Pan-African Congress in West Africa. It also established contact with the N.C.B.W.A., both in its formative stages between 1918 and in 1919, and introduced its London delegation to members of the South African Native Congress delegation which included Sol Plaatje and Josiah Gumede. In January 1919, The Gold Coast Leader reported that the A.P.U. was in "direct communication" with West African opinion, and that "it is more than likely that the Union will be a medium of inter-communication too between American black folk and their brethren on the West Coast it is desirable that our people should keep abreast of current political movements". The Gold Coast Leader, 11-18/1/1919, p.3.
7. R. Broadhurst to T. Hutton-Mills, 23/8/1920, Macaulay Papers, IV, 11.
8. Ibid., Broadhurst to Bankole-Bright, 9/9/1920.

Aborigines Protection Society wrote that they had seen Mr. E.F. Small one of the Gambian delegates, who had told them that the Congress deputation had arrived in London. Meanwhile, the President of the Anti-Slavery Society would be informed of the delegation's wishes, as they the Congress had not yet decided to approach the Colonial Office directly.⁹

Between 9th and 16th September, 1920, the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. had prepared the ground for their lobbying in London by approaching various influential newspapers and public figures. They wrote to the editor of The African World (Leo Weinthal) seeking an interview, which was fixed for September 13th at 11 a.m.,¹⁰ but only a few of the delegates had arrived in London at the time, and as Casely Hayford himself had not yet arrived, the interview with The African World was postponed for September 22nd; it was also arranged to give the N.C.B.W.A. and its constitutional demands a write up in the following issue of The African World.¹¹ At the same time, the London Committee had approached West Africa for an interview and for publicity,¹² but again, as J. Egerton-Shyngle one of the Nigerian delegates was ill, as S. Horton Jones had left for Paris on business, and as Casely Hayford the Vice-President had not yet arrived in London, T. Hutton-Mills, who was planning

9. Ibid., Travers-Buxton to Bankole-Bright, 9/9/1920.

10. Ibid., Leo Weinthal (editor) to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright, 10/9/1920; Bankole-Bright 'to the various Delegates', 11/10/1920.

11. Ibid., M.A. Thomas (assistant editor) to Bankole-Bright, 16/9/1920.

12. Ibid., Albert Cartwright, editor, to Bankole-Bright, 10/9/1920.

the deputation's strategy in Hayford's absence, proposed that the interview with West Africa scheduled for September 14th be postponed, as he was 'reluctant to encourage any propaganda work of the Congress aims without full representation of all the Delegates and their participation in such work'. He also observed that under the circumstances, it was 'very advisable that an expression of opinion of the Committee be obtained on this issue which is vital to safeguard action by only a few of the members of the said Committee', and arranged for a committee meeting for Wednesday, September 15th, to discuss the situation in general.¹³

After that meeting, Hutton-Mills proposed the next day that a good method of proceeding would be to refrain from sending the Congress Resolutions to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, until the result of the interview with the Anti-Slavery Society had been reported to the full London Committee, including Chief Oluwa.¹⁴ Hutton-Mills, however did not continue long in his organising role; Elder Dempster shipping lines informed him in September that as he had already cancelled his return passage to West Africa, it would be difficult to secure him one unless he took the ship leaving on September 29th. Hutton-Mills suspected this abrupt offer, protesting that it 'had been especially effected to accelerate my departure for the Coast'. In any case, he thought, he would have to leave England before the Congress delegation completed its whole campaign in London.¹⁵

13. Ibid., T. Hutton-Mills to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright, 14/9/1920.

14. Ibid., T. Hutton-Mills to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright, 16/9/1920.

15. Ibid., T. Hutton-Mills to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright, 28/9/1920.

Apart from reporting to the various territorial committees in West Africa, and replying to its critics in West Africa, the London Committee was also engaged in establishing contacts with influential people in England, and distributing nationalist literature to them. They were invited to tea by Lady Scott, mother of McCallum Scott, parliamentary secretary for war, on September 27th. That meeting seems to have been arranged by J.H. Harris of the Anti-Slavery Society.¹⁶ They also approached the League of Nations after they had been invited by its chairman Lord Robert Cecil, to meet the Executive Committee of the League 'with a view to discussing the bearing of the League of Nations on West African problems'.¹⁷ Interviews were also sought with Elder Dempster, no doubt with a view to discussing racial discrimination on ships sailing to and from West Africa.¹⁸ But its main points of contact were with the League of Nations Union, various M.P.s, including the Parliamentary Labour Party, and with journals like West Africa and The African World. Taking advantage of the rapport established with Liberal radicals like Professor Gilbert Murray through the League of Nations Union, the London Committee sent the Executive Committee of the latter body copies of the N.C.B.W.A. resolutions together with the introduction by the Mayor of Freetown, Samuel Barlatt. Bankole-Bright requested 'that the enclosed

16. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Lady Scott, 23/9/1920.

17. Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, J.C. Garnett to Hon. Hutton-Mills, 30/10/1920; Bankole-Bright to Dr. Maxwell Garnett, General Secretary of the League of Nations Union, 4/10/1920.

18. Ibid., Liverpool Managing Director to Bankole-Bright, 2/10/1920; Bright to Managing Director, 1/10/1920; Bright "to the various Delegates of the London Committee", 4/10/1920.

resolutions and copies of the Mayor's letter be distributed amongst the members of the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union' prior to the interview arranged for October 8th.¹⁹ The London Committee even applied for membership of the League of Nations Union, making an annual subscription of £21 to the Union's Journal Headway. This was done 'on behalf of the National Congress of British West Africa', and as 'a practical demonstration of the feelings of British West Africa towards the aims and aspirations of the League'.²⁰ On December 9th, the Executive Committee replied that they had 'unanimously resolved' to ask Major the Hon. Ormsby-Gore and Mr. J.H. Harris to accompany the N.C.B.W.A. delegation to Lord Milner of the Colonial Office, as representatives of the League of Nations Union, and asked to be informed as to when the London Committee proposed to see Lord Milner.²¹

Bankole-Bright then reported to the Congress Committee secretaries in West Africa that 'the propaganda work is now in full swing. Our committee is meeting everywhere with favourable reception.'²² Summarising their meetings with the Anti-Slavery Society, the League of Nations Union and Elder Dempster lines, Bright cautioned that the pressure campaign was becoming expensive

19. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Dr. Maxwell Garnett, 6/10/1920; Bright to 'editors of various West African journals', 1/11/1920; J.C. Garnett to Bright, 2/11/1920; Bright to the editor of West Africa, 3/11/1920.

20. Ibid., Bright to Dr. Maxwell Garnett, 9/12/1920, p. 159a; Garnett to Bright, 11/12/1920.

21. Ibid., Garnett to Bright, 9/12/1920, p. 159c.

22. Ibid., Bankole-Bright 'To the Secretary of the various Colonies', 5/10/1920.

and called for more funds to defray 'the enormous propaganda expenses'.²³ He also referred to the inactivity of the Gold Coast Section, saying that one of its delegates, Van Hein, who was the treasurer of the London Committee, had attempted a walk-out as a protest against the Gold Coast Section. In conclusion he stated that trips to various parts of Britain and a meeting with the Labour Party were being arranged, and that

It has now become imperative that the spaces in the various influential journals of Great Britain should be procured for the publication of our "Case"..... in addition to other propaganda work, it is expected that this Delegation would have as its last action to proceed to the Colonial Office accompanied probably by influential elements from the League of Nations Union and other influential personages to have their final word.²⁴

The finances of the London Committee shows the extensive scale of their lobbying. By October 1920 they had spent over £90 in printing 1,000 copies of the N.C.B.W.A. resolutions, 2,000 copies of the Petition, and 2,000 copies of the Memorandum, other expenses included the allowance of the delegates and the now famous group photographs of the delegation.²⁵ At one time the Nigerian delegates, who were actually in London on the Eleko case and only joined the N.C.B.W.A. delegation to save face, had to ask the Lagos Committee for £2,000, but apathy and opposition to the latter body made that impossible. In fact, Nigeria had no 'official' delegates in London. As Dr. R.A. Savage, secretary of the Lagos Committee made clear:

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., Bright to Hutton-Mills, 23/11/1920, p. 120.

25. Ibid., Electric Law Press Ltd. to Bankole-Bright, 26/10/1920.

My Committee desires to inform the London Committee that our local fund is not yet sufficiently strong to bear the expense of £2,000 you asked us to send to you; we would prefer to make our own arrangements with Chief Oluwa and Mr. Shyngle who left Lagos for England for other purposes than the Congress and who by kindly acting as our delegate in London saved Nigeria and the National Congress of British West Africa from an awkward situation.²⁶

Savage also referred to the difficulties the Lagos Committee was faced with, particularly the opposition of Dr. Randle and Dr. Orisadipe of Ikeja: 'We in Lagos had a very uphill work in pushing in Nigeria the cause of the National Congress. Local political differences among different sections of our Community have hampered our work....'.²⁷ The Lagos Committee, however, claimed Savage, had held a 'mass meeting' at which 3,000 people were present, and was planning to send a deputation, consisting of three members of the Committee, to important towns outside Lagos 'for propaganda work to make the aims and objects of the Congress matters of life and moment throughout the vast extent of Nigeria'.²⁸

The London Committee replied, insisting on the financial obligations of the Lagos Committee, observing that Nigeria had so far not contributed to the Congress fund, and that its decision to pay Chief Oluwa and Shyngle separately violated the idea of 'one united fund'; in any case, they reasoned, the job of 'educating the British public' involved heavy expense. Bankole-Bright noted with approval that the Nigerian Committee was now better organised

26. Ibid., Dr. R.A. Savage to Bankole-Bright, 26/10/1920.

27. Ibid., Dr. R.A. Savage to Bankole-Bright, 30/10/1920.

28. Ibid., the figure of 3,000 was probably exaggerated.

and that it was making serious efforts in the hinterland 'with the object of educating the masses', and expressed the hope that if the next session of the N.C.B.W.A. was held in Lagos instead of Freetown, as planned, they would be afforded the 'opportunity of sounding the tocsin of alarm to the recalcitrants at Lagos' (i.e. would put the fear of Congress into Dr. Randle and company). Bright also observed that the London Committee had been 'following with interest the political blunder of a section of the Lagos Community', and that it 'viewed with regret that at this particular time when the soul of a people should vibrate in accordance with the universal tune for the amelioration of the conditions of humanity, certain sections of your Community should demonstrate the spirit of political blindness to its own interest. The London Committee is, however, encouraged by the recent political upheaval at Lagos and is further encouraged to carry on its work regardless of what may be considered as an outside abused privilege (sic).'²⁹

Bankole-Bright, however, was not satisfied with criticising the Lagos Committee at long range; he and Casely Hayford authorised a Nigerian, W. Wallace-Lowell, sailing back to Nigeria 'to form branches of the said Congress in all the provinces of Northern Nigeria through such Committees' as he should deem expedient to organise. Wallace-Lowell was also given 100 copies of the Memorandum of the 'Case', 100 copies of the proceedings of the meeting between the London Committee and the League of Nations Union, and was requested to distribute these in the Northern

29. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Dr. R.A. Savage, 23/11/1920, p. 121.

Provinces.³⁰ Meanwhile H. Van-Hein, one of the Gold Coast delegates, had been gallantly loaning money to defray the expenses of the London Committee, but by November 1920 the bill had mounted to £666. 4. 7.³¹ Van Hein's balance had sunk to £8.13.10, hardly enough to keep the West African lobby going; in November Bright was compelled to write to T. Hutton-Mills the President, about 'the seriousness of the Committee's financial position'.³²

Meanwhile, J.H. Harris of the Anti-Slavery Society had introduced the London Committee to well known public figures like Sir Harry Johnston³³ and Lord Henry Bentinck; it was arranged to meet the latter at the House of Commons at the end of October; but as some members of the delegation tended to indulge in elaborate

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30. Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 12, p. 29, Casely Hayford and Bankole-Bright to W. Wallace-Lowell, Passenger "S.S. Appam", 8/1/1921.
31. Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, H. Van Hein to Bankole-Bright, 5/11/1920; Bank of Liverpool and Martins Ltd., to H. Van Hein, 5/11/1920.
32. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Hutton-Mills, 23/11/1920. The pressure group campaign cost the N.C.B.W.A. delegation £3,566. 9. 2, £1,000 of which was a loan from the Colonial Bank; another £1,296. 4. 2 was loaned by its treasurer H. Van Hein. 'Propaganda' (which included dinners, lunches, travel expenses, printing and distribution of literature, and the insertion of articles in various newspapers) accounted for over £860. Documents Belonging to Henry Van Hein Esq. Kobina Sekyi Papers, Acc. No. 585/64. The Colonial Office seems to have been concerned about the seriousness of the Committee's lobbying. G.M.L. Calder commented in the minutes: 'I should very much like to know where all the money for this expensive printing comes from!' C.O. 554/63188, 28/12/1920. Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana. Statement of Account in Connection with the London Delegation, National Congress of British West Africa.
33. Ibid. J.H. Harris to Bright, 13/10/1920; J.H. Harris to Bright, 28/10/1920; J.H. Harris to Sir Harry Johnston, 28/10/1920.

speeches, they were advised by Harris that such interviews should be limited to conversation and not speeches as parliamentarians had very little time for such speeches.³⁴ Bright sent Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck copies of the N.C.B.W.A. Petition and Memorandum of the 'Case', asking whether Lord Cavendish Bentinck would receive the delegates 'with the object of enlightening your Lordship on the Petition'. He added in conclusion: 'Considering the interest your Lordship has manifested in West African affairs it is hoped that your Lordship will identify yourself with the present demand of the National Congress of British West Africa'.³⁵

Other distinguished public figures were also approached by the delegation, including Premier David Lloyd George and Asquith.³⁶ F.W. Dove, one of the Sierra Leone delegates, claimed that the Parliamentary Under Secretary for War, Mr. McCallum Scott, was 'a friend of mine' and that he had arranged with him to meet the London Committee at the House of Commons on November 19th; Dove believed that 'through this Minister we could almost at once [get] in direct touch with Lord Milner', and that such an opportunity should not be lost.³⁷

34. J.H. Harris to Bankole-Bright, 13/10/1920; Bankole-Bright to Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, M.P., 3/11/1920.

35. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, M.P., 3/11/1920, p. 90.

36. Ibid., Vivian Phillipps, secretary to Asquith, to Bankole-Bright, 2/12/1920, p. 142; Bankole-Bright to Phillipps, 4/12/1920, p. 147; Lloyd George to N.C.B.W.A., p. 101; F.L. Stevenson to Bankole-Bright, 11/11/1920.

37. Ibid., F.W. Dove to Bankole-Bright, 19/11/1920, p. 110; F.W. Dove to Casely Hayford, 17/11/1920, p. 107.

When the interview fell through, Dove blamed Bright for failing to inform the London Committee of the right time for the interview:

Whether or not I am correct it seems that the President having fixed 1 p.m. for a meeting the matter could have been discussed, but to refuse to make the least endeavour to take advantage of an opportunity that may never recur because you think that you should have been consulted, leaving the greater issue of Public interest seems to me very questionable I only notified Mr. McCallum Scott that his Invitation had been received and was being sent to the Ag. President for action. I shall now advise him by wire that we cannot meet him.³⁸

At the same time the London Committee was also working through the Parliamentary Labour Party in their attempt to lobby the Colonial Office.³⁹ On November 10th they introduced themselves to the Parliamentary Labour Party and sent the usual copies of the

38. Ibid., F.W. Dove to Bankole-Bright, 19/11/1920, p. 111.

39. H.M. Jones, one of the Gambian delegates, had advised against any connection with the press of the Labour Party, as this, he thought, would prejudice the case of the N.C.B.W.A. delegation; He preferred a multilateral approach to 'the moderate element among politicians of all parties'. Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, p. 2; H.M. Jones to Bankole-Bright, 2/9/1920. W.R. Crocker also commented on the rapport between Labour and anti-colonial groups in his Self-Government for the Colonies, p. 71. West African newspapers, however, were generally inclined to view the Labour Party as the party of the underdog, and as early as 1918 we find The Gold Coast Leader commenting on the Manifesto of the Labour Party:

'We notice the British Labour Party in its latest manifesto includes in its planks self-determination for British subjects and peoples.' Gold Coast Leader, 28/12/1918.

The same newspaper declared in 1924:

'The phenomenon that is at present arresting attention throughout Christendom is the ascent into power in the British Constitution of the LABOUR PARTY What are the prospects of British West Africa under a Labour Government? discriminating than either conservatives or Liberals. And for that reason we may fairly expect a certain degree of sympathy with British West African aspirations in their march to nationhood in the British Commonwealth of Nations.' Ibid., 2/2/1924. It is significant that Casely Hayford, a year before his death, addressed a nationalist tract as an appeal to the Labour Party entitled The Disabilities of Black Folk and Their Treatment with an appeal to the Labour Party (1929) Colonial (now Commonwealth) Office Library. West African Pamphlets No. 160.

N.C.B.W.A. resolutions and Memorandum. They also requested whether 'the party would find it convenient to receive them with the object of enlightening the "Labour Party" on the petition and "Case".'⁴⁰ The Parliamentary Labour Party replied that its Policy Committee would be pleased to receive a small deputation from the London Congress Committee on November 24th in the Lobby of the House of Commons.⁴¹ At the interview, the N.C.B.W.A. demands were discussed, but not in full, and another interview was arranged for December to discuss the Petition and Memorandum in detail before approaching the Colonial Office.⁴² The London Committee's meetings with the Labour Party did have some effect, as questions relating to some of their grievances were asked in the Commons,* and as the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Winston Churchill, was approached, though unsuccessfully, by Labour M.Ps.

The gentlemen of the London Committee, however, were not unaware of their business interests or business trips, either to France or within England or in West Africa; T. Hutton-Mills had to leave for West Africa in October 1920; H.M. Jones went on a business trip to Paris in September 1920, whilst F.W. Dove

40. The Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 11, p. 98, Bankole-Bright to The Rt. Hon. William Adamson, M.P., 10/11/1920.

41. Ibid., p. 106, H.S. Lindsay, Secretary to the Parliamentary Labour Party Policy Committee to Bankole-Bright, 16/11/1920; Bankole-Bright to Lindsay, 22/11/1920; H.S. Lindsay to Bankole-Bright, 23/11/1920, p. 123.

42. Ibid., p. 177, Bankole-Bright to Lindsay, 23/12/1920.

* H.C. Debates, vol. 143, 30 June 1921, pp. 2333-2334, para. 57.

consulted various commercial bodies in London and Liverpool. Through Cartwright, the editor of West Africa, they met representatives of 'commercial units' operating in West Africa.⁴³ They also sought interviews with the Association of West African Merchants, as well as with Elder Dempster Ltd., and other shipping companies. Their attention, however, was drawn to pan-African affairs by the newly formed African Progress Union in London, whose energetic secretary Robert Broadhurst took interest in the Congress movement and W.E.B. Du Bois' Pan-African gatherings. The A.P.U. organised a converzatione and invited the London Committee to meet all Africans resident in London.⁴⁴ Earlier in October, Broadhurst had written to the London Committee drawing attention to the financial and other difficulties of the South African Bantu nationalist and Pan-Africanist, Mr. Sol Plaatje,⁴⁵ soliciting a donation for Plaatje's efforts to make the voice of the black South Africans heard in the metropolis of the Empire. Broadhurst felt

43. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Cartwright, 26/10/1920, p. 63.

44. Ibid., R. Broadhurst to Bankole-Bright, 2/12/1920, p. 139. Bright to Broadhurst, 1/12/1920; Broadhurst to Bright, 13/12/1920, p. 161; Broadhurst to Bright, 29/12/1920, p. 182.

45. Solomon Tshedkiso Plaatje was a member of the unsuccessful South African Native Congress delegation which came to London in 1920 to protest against the 1913 South African Lands Bill. He was known for his opposition to Tengo Jabavu's conciliatory and co-operationist policy towards South African liberals, and participated in various Pan-African gatherings in Europe and America between 1921 and 1927. He was also the author of Native Life in South Africa (1916), Some of the legal disabilities suffered by the native population of the Union of South Africa, and imperial responsibility (1913?), and Sechuana proverbs with literal translations and their European equivalents.

that 'if the Delegates would grant an interview to Mr. Plaatje he would willingly give an expose of the case and what opposition he has experienced both in South Africa and recently in London in advancing the Cause of Africans'.⁴⁶ The Committee replied that they were unable to give financial assistance to Sol Plaatje as that did 'not fall within the prescribed duties of the Congress as set out by the West African constituencies'. They added, however, that they regretted to learn of Plaatje's difficulties in Britain.⁴⁷ The African Progress Union did, however, succeed in organising an all-Africa converzatione on New Year's Day, 1920, attended by members of the South African National Native Congress delegation in London. One of them, Josiah Gumede, who later attended the Brussels Conference of the League Against Imperialism in 1927, wrote to the London Committee, seeking an interview with them before leaving for South Africa.⁴⁸ Gumede had also established contact with Herbert Macaulay, who was then Chief Oluwa's secretary, and had sent him literature on the Bantu question in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, together with various newspaper cuttings on race relations in South Africa.⁴⁹ That Macaulay was highly thought of in nationalist circles outside Nigeria is illustrated by a letter written to him from Kroonstad, South Africa, marked "Very

46. Ibid., R. Broadhurst to Bankole-Bright, 6/10/1920, p. 42.

47. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to R. Broadhurst, Secretary of the African Progress Union, 8/10/1920, p. 46.

48. Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 12, 18, J.T. Gumede to Bankole-Bright, 6/1/1921.

49. Herbert Macaulay Papers, III, 2, 23: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE: 1918-1923, J.T. Gumede to Herbert Macaulay, 16/11/1920.

Urgent", in which the author offered to subscribe to Macaulay's The Lagos Daily News and concluded:

Today the Negro man has got to be in touch with his Negro brother man from distant countries, that's why today we are dubly anxious to get your papers, so as to exchange views with our brothers in far countries.⁵⁰

The London Committee opened the new year with a determined effort to carry the campaign for elective representation into the Colonial Office itself. They got in touch with the League of Nations Union and requested that Lord Robert Cecil accompany them to the Colonial Office. Several (about 100) copies of the proceedings of their meeting with the Union were distributed to speakers and members of the Union; another 25 copies were sent to the Anti-Slavery Society.⁵¹ Literature and circulars were sent to Sir Thomas Hitching-Brooke, Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Sydney Olivier, the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, the Rt. Hon. H.H. Asquith, Albert Cartwright (the editor of West Africa), the editor of The African World, the editor of The African and Orient Review, the Earl of Mayo, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, M.P., Lord Emmott and Lady Scott. Hitching Brooke replied that he was interested in the affairs of the N.C.B.W.A. and expressed the hope that the Congress proposals would be 'sympathetically received'.⁵² The Parliamentary Labour Party also replied, promising to 'use its influence' if the Congress London Committee found it difficult to

50. Herbert Macaulay Papers, III, 9, 1930: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE; R.A.M. Dumah to H. Macaulay, 2/12/1930.

51. Macaulay Papers, IV, 12, p. 5: Bankole-Bright to Garnett, 3/1/1921; IV, 12, p. 4: Bankole-Bright to J.H. Harris, 3/1/1921.

52. Ibid., Hitching Brooke to Bright, 4/1/1921, p. 12.

secure an interview with the Colonial Office.⁵³ Bright then informed them that the London Committee had now decided to interview the Colonial Office and that influential representatives from the League of Nations Union would be accompanying them; the Committee, however, had tried 'to have representatives from the different sections of the House of Commons to accompany it', and had suggested Mr. W.M. Adamson of the Parliamentary Labour Party and another Labour M.P.⁵⁴ McCallum Scott, under secretary for war, and Leo Weinthal, editor of The African World, both of whom were asked to give their 'moral support' to the Congress movement and to accompany the Congress delegation to the Colonial Office, were unable to do so because of other public engagements.⁵⁵

The London Committee then wrote to the Rt. Hon. H.H. Asquith, and regretted that an interview with him had not been possible, reminding him that he had, as early as 1898, taken some interest in West African politics:

.... Our Committee hopes you have not lost interest in the "Case" of West Africa, an interest which was manifested by you in the fact that you prepared the "Case" for the Gold Coast in its demand for the franchise in the year 1898 the request for an interview with you is a mandate from united West Africa It is the wish of this Delegation to interview the Colonial Office shortly but its propaganda work will not be complete without seeing you prior to our interview with the Colonial Office.⁵⁶

53. Ibid., H.S. Lindsay to Bright, 3/1/1921, p. 8.

54. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to the Secretary to the Labour Party, House of Commons, 6/1/1921, p. 19.

55. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to McCallum Scott, Leo Weinthal and Leslie Scott, 6/1/1920, p. 20. M.A. Thomas, African World, to Bright, 7/1/1921, p. 25. McCallum Scott to Bright, 8/1/1921. Leslie Scott was the author of Struggle for native rights in Rhodesia (1918?).

56. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to the Rt. Hon. H.H. Asquith, M.P., 8/1/1921.

Congress literature was also sent to the Foreign Secretary Earl Curzon, the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill who had succeeded Lord Milner at the Colonial Office, the Hon. E.S. Montagu, the Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain, Dr. Addison the Minister of Health, and the Rt. Hon. Edward Short the Home Secretary, soliciting their 'careful and serious attention'.⁵⁷

As far as publicity was concerned, the Committee had useful allies in West Africa, The Morning Post, The Africa and Orient Review and The African World. West Africa, however, was particularly useful to them as its editor Albert Cartwright, was sympathetic to the political programme of the N.C.B.W.A.⁵⁸ Cartwright's journal, however, took a rather moderate line in its interpretation of the elective principle particularly after Sir Hugh Clifford's devastating attack on the Congress' pretensions to leadership of the West African masses.⁵⁹ Because of its ambivalence, West Africa soon fell foul of the London Committee

57. Ibid., Bankole-Bright to Earl Curzon, Winston Churchill, E.S. Montagu, Austen Chamberlain, Dr. Addison, Edward Short, 8/1/1921.

58. West Africa was established in London in 1917, mainly as an organ of West African commercial interests: 'In those days the journal was directed at Europeans. Because of its attitudes, however, it soon became popular with members of the African elite....'; Chief Awolowo wrote of the first editor, Mr. Albert Cartwright, that he was a 'genuine believer in and fighter for accelerated political advancement for the Africans. Mr. Cartwright commended the aims of the first West African National Congress to British firms in the early twenties'. West Africa, No. 2570, 3/9/66. See also the Fiftieth Anniversary issue of West Africa which touches briefly on Cartwright's relations with Lord Milner. West Africa No. 2592, February 1967, p. 153.

59. David Kimble: A Political History of Ghana (O.U.P., 1963), p. 388.

which also accused it of publishing what was understood to have been a private conversation between Bankole-Bright, the secretary to the London Committee, and Albert Cartwright, and of publishing the contents of a letter written by Casely Hayford to Sir William Geary. Casely Hayford protested that West Africa had no right to publish any correspondence between him and Sir William Geary.⁶⁰

Bankole-Bright decided to be generous and treat the whole affair as 'a pernicious mis-statement of facts' in West Africa and as a misunderstanding of Congress policy; he strongly deprecated, however, West Africa's reporting of his 'confidential and unofficial conversation' with Cartwright.⁶¹ He roundly told West Africa and The African World that Congress policy was not the business of any newspaper but that of the London Committee, and reminded them that

.... this movement of the Congress is a constitutional movement to counteract the political unrest at present existing in West Africa, [and] is an absolute fact known to those who are really behind the political scenes of British West Africa.⁶²

In spite of this misunderstanding, however, relations between West Africa and the West African nationalists remained cordial and Cartwright continued to take interest in the affairs of the Congress movement. In 1922, in response to a letter from S.R. Wood, Secretary General of the N.C.B.W.A., Cartwright counselled:

.... in my humble judgment, the greatest immediate work with which the Congress can occupy itself is the work of securing the principle of the elective franchise in the

60. Herbert Macaulay Papers, IV, 12, Casely Hayford to Cartwright, 17/1/1921.

61. Ibid., Bright to Cartwright, 17/1/1921.

62. Ibid., Bright to Editors of West Africa and The African World, 25/1/1921. My emphasis; c.f. footnotes 23-25.

four colonies, my strong feeling being that if this is brought about, all other reforms will, little by little, and as the countries develop, be advocated and gradually brought into being ... if the Congress concentrated upon broad principles such as that of the elective franchise, it would do a good day's work for British West Africa and the British-African connection.⁶³

It was this 'principle of the elective franchise' that was already in 1921 engaging the attention of Sir Hugh Clifford, one of the shrewdest, most aristocratic, and hardworking Governors in the colonial empire - and one of the most disliked by nationalists in Ceylon and West Africa. It now remains to be seen whether it was the N.C.B.W.A. or its arch enemy, Sir Hugh, who did 'a good day's work' in bringing elective representation to West Africa.

(I)

THE N.C.B.W.A. vs. THE COLONIAL OFFICE: 1920-21.

Active official opposition to the N.C.B.W.A. did not begin until its delegation was in London. There can be no doubt that the Congress, in bypassing the Governors and appealing to His Majesty in Council, irritated the progressive-conservative (or conservative-progressive?) Guggisberg of the Gold Coast and Wilkinson of Sierra Leone, and enraged the aristocratic Sir Hugh Clifford of Nigeria, who, since his Malay days, had claimed that he really 'understood the native'. There is much truth, however,

63. Albert Cartwright, editor of West Africa, to S.R. Wood, Secretary of the N.C.B.W.A., GAMBIA 221/1922, File No. 2/507, 17/10/1922. G.R.O. Cartwright had also given some journalistic assistance to Herbert Macaulay's prosecution of the Eleko case; see I.B. Thomas: Life History of Herbert Macaulay (Third Edition, 1947), pp. ii-iii.

in W.E.G. Sekyi's contention that the neutralisation of the N.C.B.W.A. delegation was 'an act of official diplomacy'.⁶⁴ In fairness, however, it must be stated that the delegation erred tactically in appealing direct to Caesar and in the drawing up of its Petition which became an uneasy combination of idealism and practical politics, of the trivial and the important. These weaknesses made it an easy target both to the mandarins at the Colonial Office and to the gubernatorial thunderbolts from West Africa.

On October 23rd, Governor Guggisberg telegraphed the Colonial Office, repudiating the claims of the N.C.B.W.A.; in particular, he deprecated the 'Government of Gold Coast Colony being short circuited by delegates going direct Colonial Office' and recommended to Lord Milner that:

.... if your Lordship receives (these) delegates, utmost caution desirable and that H.M.G. should not commit itself in any way beyond promising to forward any memorial to me for considered recommendations after consulting with representatives of the various communities of the Gold Coast.... This telegram is intended to forearm S. of S. and Under S. of S. for the Colonies with reference to my conversation with them in case interview is asked for.⁶⁵

64. The Gold Coast Times, 23/5/1931, pp. 7-8: 'The defeat of the Congress Petition was an act of official diplomacy. This act of official diplomacy was rendered successful or effective by the weight which the rivalry between the two legal advisers of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society made it possible for the Executive of the latter Society to lend to the claim of the Omanhene of Akyem Abuaka to oppose the Congress aims in the name of the principal national authorities on the Gold Coast....' W.E.G. Sekyi: 'On Some Recent Movements in West Africa: A Study of White Methods of Repression.'

65. C.O. 554/46/52395, 23/10/1920: "Paraphrase of a telegram from Governor, Gold Coast, received at the Colonial Office on the 23rd October at 4.30 p.m." The full text of the telegram ran:
[Contd.]

Lord Milner replied that the London Committee had merely sent him copies of the Resolutions passed at Accra and had not applied for an interview with him. He assured Guggisberg that he would 'certainly not promise any constitutional changes without consulting' him.⁶⁶

On November 25th, 1920, Sir Hugh Clifford followed Guggisberg with an almost identical telegram against the N.C.B.W.A.; the only difference was that Sir Hugh's prose was more elegant:

With reference to petition to His Majesty the King in Council from so-called "National Congress of British West Africa" copies of which have been forwarded to me.... I regard it as important that it should be known that their self-appointed body is in no way representative of Nigeria,

65. Contd.]

Casely Hayford President of National Congress of British West Africa and Hutton Mills Vice President are understood to be in England apparently with object of petitioning for practical self-government by demanding unofficial credit taxation and expenditure. Second object influence public opinion in England.

Country not ready for self-government which fatal development and race progress. Gold Coast delegates represent literates of towns on sea coast mere fraction of population not representing chiefs. Chiefs who have given their views privately to me resent attempt by literates to govern them. Tendency Congress reform impugn institutions which policy of Government to support. Gold Coast happy under present conditions except usual malcontents and never before had such opportunity of local self-government and employment of Africans in higher posts than are offered by Government. Present schemes for town councils and native civil service now is led away by regard analogy with India and Egypt forgetting different stage of civilization. I suspect Congress exercising bad influence on semi-literate young men - result trade union forming and strikes threatening. Situation well in hand at present

See also C.O. 555/IND:19124, despatch No. 52395, 25/10/20. Contrary to Martin Wight (The Gold Coast Legislative Council, Faber and Faber, 1964, p. 27) 'several Gold Coast chiefs and members of the Aborigines Society' did not cable to the Colonial Office denouncing the N.C.B.W.A. That was done by Guggisberg, Nana Sir Ofori Atta and a few chiefs from Nana Ofori Atta's region, Western Province.

66. Lord Milner, minute to despatch No. 52395, C.O. 554/46, 26/10/20.

that is, and all its ways and works, have been formally repudiated by a number of Lagosians who stand for the best educated elements of African opinion in the more Europeanised areas near the coast; that neither of the Soi-Disant Nigerian Delegates at present in London has any personal knowledge of more than insignificant portions of Nigeria, or of more than a mere numerical fraction of the various native states and tribal divisions of which Nigeria is composed; that the published programme of the Conference, if it were possible of realisation, which it today is not, would be subversive of all the native Governments and of the indigenous political and social institutions by the agency of which Nigerian kingdoms and tribal areas are ruled, would cause anarchy, wholesale discontent and probably sporadic insurrections in many parts of Nigeria, and would deal a death blow to genuine local national native self Government. My Government therefore regards the doings of these "Nigerian Delegates" as diametrically opposed to the interests of the African population of Nigeria, and the delegates themselves totally unrepresentative of them.⁶⁷

Sir Herbert Read at the Colonial Office agreed with Sir Hugh; he thought J. Egerton Shyngle was a non-Nigerian, and was very harsh with 'this precious pair of rascals' i.e. 'that ridiculous petty chief Oluwa who is masquerading as a Nigerian potentate with his ex-convict Secretary Mr. Macaulay'. It was decided to send the Congress a modified version of Sir Hugh's telegram.⁶⁸

At the end of October, just before Clifford despatched his telegram, the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. submitted the Petition to the Colonial Office, requesting that it be laid before His Majesty the King Emperor in Council. From that moment the Colonial Office assumed an attitude which can only be described as hostile and contemptuous - and in some cases, petty. They referred to them as 'Herbert Macaulay and his gang', and when in November the Committee applied for permission to lay a wreath, on

67. Despatch No. 5890; C.O. 553/46, 25/11/20.

68. Ibid.

behalf of West Africa at the foot of the Cenotaph on Armistice Day, certain officials at the Colonial Office saw their request as a move to score more publicity, and accordingly suggested that it would 'not be a bad thing to take the wind out of their sails by telegraphing to Gold Coast and Nigeria suggesting they should instruct Crown Agents to lay a wreath on their behalf'. Eventually it was decided to allow them to lay wreaths - 'after the ceremony'.⁶⁹

How did the Colonial Office view the N.C.B.W.A. Petition? In the first place, it was wrongly assumed that the Congress delegation was asking for self-government.⁷⁰ They rightly criticised the petitioners for mixing up the affairs of all the West African colonies in 'rather a haphazard manner' and for failing to differentiate between the circumstances in one colony and another.⁷¹ In their view, the very names of the petitioners showed that the Congress represented no one 'except the "intellectual" natives of the barrister and trader class'. As for the London Committee, which claimed it represented West African opinion, its position was rather anomalous, and the Colonial Office was advised not to 'go any distance towards recognising the existence of the London Committee'.⁷²

69. Minute to C.O. 554/46/54091, 3/11/20.

70. Minute to C.O. 554/46/53561, 16/11/20 by Clarsson, Calder and Ellis.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., Calder also agreed that 'The London Committee has no 'locus standi' at all, especially considering its totally unrepresentative nature', and added with a Machiavellian touch, 'but we can hardly turn it down entirely on that ground. We can leave it to the Governors to demolish, the absolute omission of any mention of the native courts in Nigeria is the sort of point we can count on Sir H. Clifford to point out.' Ibid., minute to, 12/11/20. J.A. Calder counselled: 'As regards recognising the London Committee I think it is purely a matter
[Contd.]

More specifically, the Colonial Office rejected the Congress' view (Para. 14 of the Petition) that nominated members of the Legislative Council did not represent the people:

There can be little doubt that a nominated man will provide better representation of the views of the people than any kind of election can produce. The people in West Africa are, as General Guggisberg says, not ripe for representative institutions, and it would be a very cruel kindness to any West African colony to grant any such constitution.⁷³

The demand for the reconstruction of the Legislative Councils, it was thought, stemmed mainly from objections to the Palm Kernels Export Duty Ordinance, criticism of which was mainly confined to the Gold Coast. In any case, they reasoned, any reconstruction of the Legislative Councils, so that half the members were elected and the Council was vested with the power of imposing taxes, 'would mean the abandonment of financial control in the British West African colonies' and would be 'disastrous'. The Congress' criticism of the Empire Resources Development Committee was dismissed as a 'very dead horse'; as for a West African Appeal Court,

72. Contd.] of policy, and that our line should be that we do not wish to give these people any needless cause for offence. The London Committee is probably just as capable of representing the views of these people as the Committee appointed with Headquarters at Sekondi to continue the work of the Accra National Conference.' Ibid., minute to, 19/11/20. Yet another official (probably Colonel Amery) rudely commented on 19/11/20: 'This is emphatically a case of the Ten Tutors of Tooley Point - who, it will be recollected, sent in a petition beginning: "We the people of England etc. - In Sierra Leone at any rate the last native is the Creole, and if our protection were withdrawn the chief question would be with what particular sauce Messers Barlatt, Dove etc. should be eaten ...' It is not surprising that this view was rejected outright, with the Secretary of State for the Colonies commenting: 'S. of S. does not wish this to go into the submission to H.M.'.

73. Ibid., minute to, 16/11/20.

the Colonial Office thought that in spite of the Congress' proposal, and the recent proposal for such reforms by Chief Justice Sir G. Purcell to the Governor of Sierra Leone, no useful purpose could be served by its creation.⁷⁴ The demand for municipal councils was not favourably received either; it was pointed out that they had not been a success in Freetown, Accra and Sekondi.⁷⁵

J.A. Calder made perhaps the most succinct and balanced assessment of the Government's attitude towards the N.C.B.W.A. He recommended:

It is only by referring to the Governors for observations that we can decide on what points if any, it is possible to meet their views. Even if one were in sympathy with their aims, it is impossible to deny that none of our West African Colonies are ripe for an elective franchise or an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council while the legal reforms suggested are designed almost solely to benefit the native barrister, not to further the cause of justice or to protect the aboriginal native

The petition does not lie to the King in Council and we might refer it back on that ground, but on the whole I think it should be referred to H.M. and that it is sufficiently important to merit a formal submission by the S. of S. The submission should be generally to the effect that the S. of S. is unable to advise H.M. that the time is yet come for the introduction into any of the British West African Colonies and Protectorates of the principles of election to the Legislative Councils or of unofficial majorities on these Councils; that as regards the legal changes, such as a new constitution for the West African Appeal Court, the repeal of certain ordinances and the admission of Counsel in all cases, he is unable to advise that the changes suggested would improve the administration of justice or be in the interests of the great bulk of the population; and that as regards the

74. Ibid.

75. Sir H.J. Read commented: 'The question of extending the functions of town councils in the Gold Coast is engaging General Guggisberg's attention, but I do not think that Municipal Government by natives of West Africa can ever be anything of a success for some time to come'. Ibid.

many other points raised in the petition the S. of S. advises that he be authorized to consult the Governors and determine regarding each particular point what action, if any, is possible and desirable.⁷⁶

Calder's minute was to form, almost verbatim, Lord Milner's reply to the N.C.B.W.A. respecting elective representation.⁷⁷ It is worth noting, however, that whereas Calder, Ellis and Clarsson generally took the no-change line, Sir H.J.Read was usually open to alternative arguments, as the correspondence with Sir Hugh Clifford regarding elective representation was to show.

While the Colonial Office was settling the fate of the N.C.B.W.A. delegation, the West African Governors, particularly Guggisberg, were doing their utmost to discredit the N.C.B.W.A. Only Governor Wilkinson of Sierra Leone could be said to have been sympathetic to the Congress movement, although he too disapproved of the way its leaders selected themselves. On January 2nd, 1921, Guggisberg cabled the Colonial Office explaining that Nana Ofori Atta, paramount Chief of Akyem Abuakwa had vigorously criticised the N.C.B.W.A. at a meeting of the Legislative Council on December 30th:

He said that Congress entirely unrepresentative of and repudiated by practically all Chiefs in the Gold Coast. Fact further proved by refusal of Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, which consists of Chiefs of Western and Central Provinces, to countenance movement when approached previous to formation of congress; and in view of the fact that British rule in Gold Coast rests on treaties made by Queen Victoria with Chiefs, nobody who is not truly representative of Chiefs has a right to approach His Majesty with view to changing Constitution. He further deplored action of unrepresentative body as it deals a crushing blow to cause of education in Gold Coast, as illiterates have now just

76. Ibid., minute to, by J.A. Calder, 19/11/20.

77. Ibid., minute to, 23/12/20: 'The S. of S. agrees to action proposed - i.e. by Mr. Calder'

complaint that education leads to belittling and ignoring their native rulers thus tending to opposition to education and progress of people. In this connection he said that Chiefs have already some reason to fear disintegrating effect on native institutions caused among the young men by unconstitutional speeches and attitude of educated but unrepresentative minority. He criticised action of Gold Coast members of Congress in associating with themselves natives of other colonies where native constitution is totally different. As to the main plank of Congress platform, he said that chiefs for some time have been preparing full scheme more effective representation of native and other interests on the Legislative Council

Guggisberg also reported that Amonu, paramount Chief of Anomabu, Dr. Quartey Papafio and E.J.P. Brown made similar criticisms and denounced the Congress for bypassing the Governors, although Clifford in 1918 and Guggisberg in 1919 had promised to discuss the matter of legislative reforms.⁷⁸

On the basis of Ofori Atta's speech, Guggisberg concluded, with some exaggeration:

My personal conclusion is that whole tone, considering carefully speeches of four African members, shows that vast majority of Gold Coast people, probably 99% bitterly resent claims of few self-selected individuals to represent a country in which the elective system is so strong a feature of the constitution of tribal rule, which is certainly one of the finest types of democratic Government extant.⁷⁹

Guggisberg requested that the telegram be laid before the King, to show His Majesty the true feeling of the people of the Gold Coast. He also strongly urged that a copy should be sent to the League of Nations Union 'whose personal interview with Delegates not accredited by Gold Coast on subject which does not form part of League's duties has produced mischievous effect',⁸⁰ and that a

78. Guggisberg, telegram of 2/1/21, C.O. 554/50/233.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

summary of the telegram be published in the press.

As a result of Guggisberg's telegram, Calder thought that His Majesty should be advised to authorize the Secretary of State for the Colonies to inform the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. that he would not consider their petition unless it was submitted through the governments concerned.⁸¹ Calder's new procedure, influenced by Guggisberg's reporting of Ofori Atta's speech, however, was later modified and his minute of November 19th, 1920 (C.O. 53561/20) preferred. To insist on sending the Congress petition through the Governor because the delegates were unrepresentative, seemed rather illogical. The most they could do was to send the London Committee a 'fitting reply' to their petition.

On January 8th, Lord Milner advised His Majesty along the lines suggested by J.A. Calder:

.... Your Majesty will observe that the claim of this Congress to represent native opinion in West Africa is expressly repudiated by those best qualified to speak on their behalf, and that the policy advocated by the Congress is regarded by them as inimical to native interests.

Lord Milner is unable to advise Your Majesty that the time has yet come for the introduction into any of the West African Colonies and Protectorates of the principles of election to the Legislative Councils and of unofficial majorities on those Councils; nor does he consider that the legal changes suggested would improve the administration of justice and be in the interest of the great bulk of the native populations. He advises that he be authorised to reply to the petitioners accordingly.⁸²

Three days after this despatch was sent, the London Committee asked

81. Ibid.; minute to, 2/1/21.

82. Ibid., draft of despatch from Viscount Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to H.M. the King, 8/1/21. It is interesting to note that Milner was also undecided at that time about Southern Rhodesia's claim for responsible government. H.C. vol. 131, 30 June, 1920; p. 444, para. 70.

for an interview with Lord Milner; their delegation was to be accompanied by Professor Gilbert Murray of the League of Nations Union, the Hon. Major Ormsby Gore, M.P. (also of the League of Nations Union), Charles Roberts former Under Secretary of State for India, the President of the Anti-Slavery Society and two other committee members of the Society, McCallum Scott (Liberal Coalition M.P.), two Labour M.P.s, and Mr. J.H. Batty and Major-General Grey, who were connected with West African commerce.⁸³ The request for an interview was turned down.⁸⁴ The London Committee was also sent the full text of Lord Milner's despatch to the King.⁸⁵

Having settled, for the time being, the question of elective representation, Milner sought the opinion of the West African Governors as to what should be done regarding the other points raised in the Congress petition. Guggisberg again sent a telegram, requesting that Nana Ofori Atta's speech should be published in West Africa and the African World. Sir Herbert Read was 'doubtful' about the diplomatic soundness of this move, as he was 'afraid that, by appearing to attach so much importance to these people, we may give them an advantage which they would not otherwise get'.

Lord Milner, however, thought otherwise: in his view, the National Congress men were 'pretty busy just now making converts', and would

83. Casely Hayford and Bankole-Bright to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, C.O. 554/50/53561, 11/1/21.

84. '.... Lord Milner does not consider that any useful purpose would be served by his granting an interview to the Delegates now in London with the object of discussing with them the salient points in the petition.' C.O. 554/50/233, 26/1/21: Sir H.J. Read to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright.

85. Ibid.

continue as long as no attempt was made to discredit them. The only way to do this, he thought, was by publishing General Guggisberg's telegram as widely as possible, as that 'would throw doubt on their representative character. It is not wise to ignore them.'⁸⁶

Though refused an interview with Lord Milner, the London Committee wrote a lengthy letter to him on Feb. 1, in a fruitless attempt to prove their representative character.⁸⁷ Calder thought that as the Colonial Office had refused to discuss the petition with the London Committee, it would 'be very unwise to allow ourselves to be drawn into further controversy with them regarding their preposterous claims to represent the British West African Colonies', and that the decision not to grant them an interview could not be reconsidered. Harding added that any talk of the elective principle and of unofficial majorities, as well as legal reforms, was out of the question, as Lord Milner had decided. Colonel Amery advised that to prevent further nuisance, Lord Milner's despatch should be published extensively.⁸⁸

The London Committee, however, decided to fight on, and got a Labour M.P., Mr. J.R. Clynes, to write to Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Milner's successor, on their behalf. The Labour Party had received a deputation from the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. who desired an interview with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Although they were promised help in obtaining the

86. Ibid., minute to despatch, in C.O. 554/50/4547, 27/1/21.

87. Ibid., C.O. 554/50/5352, 2/2/21.

88. Ibid., minutes to, 2/2/21.

interview, their request was refused by Lord Milner, and 'the Labour Party would be obliged if you (i.e. Mr. Churchill) could see your way to receive the deputation which we feel sure is very representative and entitled to some consideration'.⁸⁹ Churchill replied on Feb. 17, that he had already sent the delegation a copy of Milner's despatch, that reports from West Africa said the London Committee was not representative of West African opinion, and that 'it would not be in the best interests of those Colonies if I were to depart from my predecessor's decision'. A letter to the same effect was sent to the London Committee.⁹⁰

On February 19th, the London Committee conceded the first round to the Colonial Office; they noted with regret that in spite of all their efforts at persuasion, Winston Churchill was unable to revise the decision of Lord Milner on elective representation. Under the circumstances, all they could do was to return to West Africa to report to the N.C.B.W.A. and to plan another campaign. The Committee added, partly as a veiled threat and partly as a parting shot:

We are, also, to welcome your assumption of the office of Colonial Minister at this eventful period of West African National aspiration, and to hope that your administration would mark the beginning of a healthy mutual understanding and co-operation with the people of British West Africa in the management of their own internal affairs, thereby establishing in the Colonial Office a policy for the recognition of healthy West African opinion.⁹¹

89. Ibid., J.R. Clynes, M.P., to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16/2/21.

90. Ibid., Winston Churchill to Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright; M.1/5352/W. Africa, 17/2/21.

91. Ibid., H.C. Bankole-Bright and Casely Hayford to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, C.O. 8440, 19/2/21, C.O. 554/50.

Harding interpreted the Committee's letter as 'more or less complete capitulation at any rate for the present'. He advised that the Secretary of State should reply that he noted the Committee was returning to West Africa, and that any further developments, based on the reports of the Governors, relating to constitutional changes would be made public in the colonies concerned.

Meanwhile, back in West Africa the delegates set to work to demonstrate local support for the N.C.B.W.A. and to deal with the opposition groups. In March, a flood of telegrams, letters and summaries of Congress resolutions reached the Colonial Office from the four colonies, one of them addressed to the Prime Minister. Most of the Gold Coast telegrams came from Chiefs who attacked Nana Ofori Atta's views on the Congress, and reaffirmed their support for the movement.⁹² The battle of the telegrams and the denunciations, however, seem to have made no impression on the Colonial Office. J.E.W. Flood, posing as the Machiavelli of the piece, commented rather mischievously: 'I rather thought this would turn up - or something like it. We can leave them to squabble.'⁹³ Nana Ofori Atta seemed left in the lurch; Guggisberg

92. Letters enclosed in C.S.O. No. 13863, 22/7/21; C.O. 554/51. Nana Atta Fuah, Omanhene of Akim-Kotoku, in a letter dated 7/4/21 to S.R. Wood stated: 'If the Honourable Nana Ofori Atta when speaking said he spoke with the knowledge, consent and authority of the Chiefs of the Gold Coast, he spoke a lie as far as I am concerned. I am one of the Amanhene in the Gold Coast, and I know absolutely nothing of what the said Honourable Omanhene intended to say or said before the Legislative Council on the 30/12/1920.... I am in sympathy with the movement and the aspirations of the Congress.... I agree with you in the topics discussed by you at the grand meeting at Accra.' Also C.O. 554/51/42284, 27/6/21.

93. Ibid., minute to, 26/3/21.

maintained a dignified silence befitting an emperor disrobed. What was important was that the Congress did not get what it wanted, when it wanted it and how it wanted it.⁹⁴

In March, 1921, Sir Hugh Clifford reported to the Colonial Office, commenting on municipal institutions in West Africa, and on some of the grievances expressed in the Congress petition. He denied that considerations of race or colour affected the appointment of Africans to the West African Medical Service or to senior posts in the civil service; for such posts, he said, 'exceptional strength of character' was needed. Sir Hugh thought that the idea of a West African university was 'in every way laudable', but that attention must first be paid to teacher training facilities and the development of primary education. Turning to paragraph 24 of the Congress petition which dealt with municipal councils, Sir Hugh recalled that in 1915, as Governor of the Gold Coast, he had advised the Colonial Office that attempts to create municipal councils in the main towns in West Africa had proved a failure. The only Council in Nigeria was the Lagos Town Council, to which

94. The African World (1919-1922) noted that 1921 was a year of much activity and controversy in the Gold Coast: 'The first series of incidents pertained to the National Congress movement, when the Government, acting on the strength of a speech made by a well-known Paramount Chief - who stated he, on behalf of practically all the chiefs in the country, opposed the demands made by the London deputation, cabled a summary to the United Kingdom. This proved premature for in a series of activities that culminated in a meeting of Chiefs the Hon. Nana Ofori Atta's statement was repudiated by all but three Chiefs, and resolutions cabled to this side that showed the Chiefs under Nana Mbra^{III}, Omanhene of Cape Coast, were practically en masse in favour of the National Congress movement.' p. 89; D. Kimble, op.cit., pp. 396-397.

African members were elected, though the bulk of the Council funds were in the form of Treasury grants-in-aid, and its revenue derived from rates. In view of the Council's financial weakness, Sir Hugh thought it would not be 'to the public interest', to give an elected Mayor and Corporation control over the Council's expenditure.⁹⁵ In Britain, he said, the Municipalities, 'upon which our Town Council is ostensibly modelled', were natural out-growths of British habits, but 'the spirit which gave them birth is wholly lacking in the people of Lagos.... witness the agitation culminating in riots which followed the imposition of the water-rate....'⁹⁶

In June of the same year Guggisberg of the Gold Coast also submitted a report to the Colonial Office, similar to that of Sir Hugh. As regards municipal government, Guggisberg said the matter had been under consideration for the past one and a half years i.e. since 1920, and that a special Committee was 'engaged in formulating proposals for the liberal development of Municipal Government in the Gold Coast.'⁹⁷ A Government Gazette⁹⁸ disclosed that a Town Councils Committee had been appointed to advise on reforms. This Committee included John Maxwell (Provincial Commissioner - chairman); Hon. J.E. Casely Hayford, Hon. E.J.P. Brown and J. Glover Addo. While recognising, like Clifford, that

95. Despatch in C.O. 554/50/16973, 16/3/21. Sir Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

96. Ibid., para. 9.

97. Despatch G.C. No. 474, C.O. 27392, 10/5/21; C.O. 554/50. Guggisberg to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

98. Ibid. No. 4, 1921, Jan. 15. G.C. No. 474, 10/5/21.

'a Town Council cannot set up as an independent Kingdom', Guggisberg believed that the new councils would be useful as training grounds for self-government. He also believed that the Presidency of the Council should be open to Africans; there was also scope for increasing the number of unofficial members. Guggisberg would rather have good roads, electric lights, good drainage etc. than a West African university; the latter idea, he said, was 'mischievously premature' and was the 'bland opinion of laymen'.⁹⁹

(II)

THE GENESIS OF THE 1922 CONSTITUTION

Between March 1920 when the N.C.B.W.A. was inaugurated and March 1921 when Sir Hugh began to modify his rigid opposition to the question of elective representation, Sir Hugh's attitude to elective representation remained negative. In fact, he hardly referred to the question in public between these dates. He seems to have been more concerned with resurrecting and refurbishing the moribund Nigerian Council to accommodate 'representative members of the unofficial communities',¹⁰⁰ than with implementing the elective principle in the Legislative Council. In his address, he referred to the 'inutility of the Nigerian Council as at present constituted', and made it clear that he was looking at the question

99. Despatch G.C. No. 475, C.O. 27392, 2/6/21; C.O. 554/50.

100. Nigerian Council: Address by the Governor, 29/12/1920. p. 17.

'purely from the standpoint of the Administration' and on 'the lines upon which the Nigerian Council might profitably be reconstructed in order to make it 'a serious factor in the government of the Colony and Protectorate', and also as truly and practically representative of all Nigerian interests....',¹⁰¹ as far as that was possible. With respect to the Legislative Council, Sir Hugh did not have anything new or radical to say either during the period March 1920 and mid 1921. Although he always claimed that he planned to reform the Legislative Council even before the N.C.B.W.A. drew attention to its inadequacies, Sir Hugh was really flying a kite already constructed by his predecessor in Nigeria - a policy which aimed at the reconstitution of the Nigerian Legislative Council, but made no mention of elective representation.¹⁰² Such reconstruction meant the retention of an official majority, four unofficial (nominated) members, and the inclusion of the Colony Commissioner.¹⁰³

It appears, then, that up to March 1921 when Sir Hugh abandoned his plan to reconstitute the Nigerian Council and opted for its abolition, he had been toying with the idea of galvanising that body in an attempt to solve the dilemma of how to reconcile

101. Ibid., p. 17.

102. C. 170/1918, Acting Governor of Nigeria to Rt. Hon. Walter H. Long, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7/12/1918. Ibadan Federal Archives, Nigeria.

103. Ibid., Minute to despatch C/17/18, sec. 8, 14/11/18. This reform proposal was not drawn up by Clifford, as he became Governor of Nigeria on 23rd July 1919: see CSO No. N3280, 1920; Lord Milner to Clifford, 1/12/20. Nigerian National Archives, Ibadan.

the claims for representative institutions with the system of indirect rule. There are indications that even by the end of 1919, he had not envisaged any changes before 1921:¹⁰⁴ instead, he elected to treat the Nigerian Council which he called a 'debating society', to his celebrated gubernatorial lectures on the impossibility of a 'West African Nationality' and of a Nigerian nation.¹⁰⁵ In the early part of 1921 he informed the Colonial Office of his scheme for the reconstruction of the Nigerian Council and the Legislative Council, proposing that the title of Assistant Chief Secretary to the Government be changed to Deputy Chief Secretary, and that the holder of that post be appointed as ex-officio member of his reorganized Nigerian Council. There was no mention of elected members, but the Colonial Office did not view his proposals favourably, and decided to shelve them, 'as if they led to the abolition or modification of the Nigerian Council....'.¹⁰⁶ The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Winston Churchill) would not take any action on Sir Hugh's proposals, as he was already considering certain 'changes which may render it unnecessary to consider those proposals....'.¹⁰⁷

Paradoxically, either the lobbying and subsequent failure of the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. must have made some

104. J. Wheare, op.cit., p. 30; c.f. K. Ezera, op.cit., p. 27.

105. See Nigerian Council: Addresses by the Governor, 1920.

106. Minute to despatch in C.O. 17154/Nigeria; C.O. 583/100, 29/4/21.

107. Ibid.; the nature of these 'changes' were not disclosed, but it is certain, judging from Churchill's attitude (a) to the question of Indian reforms (b) to Clifford's scheme for limited elective representation in mid 1921, that such 'changes' would not have been as liberal as they sound.

impression on Sir Hugh, or he must have felt that his proposal to reconstitute the Nigerian Council and the Legislative Council did not sufficiently impress the Colonial Office. For in March 1921, two months after Lord Milner, aided by Clifford himself, rejected the petition of the London Committee, Sir Hugh despatched a lengthy and impressive memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which he recommended the abolition of both the Nigerian Council and the Legislative Council, and the creation of a new Legislative Council for Southern Nigeria with provision for four elected members.¹⁰⁸

Before 1906, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos had a Legislative Council which legislated for Lagos Colony and, as far as British jurisdiction extended, for the Lagos Protectorate. The Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was legislated for by the High Commissioner who also legislated for Northern Nigeria where there was no Legislative Council. When the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos was amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and became the colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906, the Legislative Council of Lagos was slightly expanded to become the legislative body for the whole Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Northern Nigeria remained as before. In his proposals for the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria,¹⁰⁹ Sir Frederick Lugard considered the difficulties involved in unofficial representation on the Legislative Council 'insuperable'.

108. Despatch in Gov. 1959/21 (Confidential): 'Legislative Council: Reconstitution'; C.O. 583/100.

109. See C.O. 16460/1913.

It was difficult, if not impossible, he said, to create one Legislative Council for Nigeria, in which the North would be effectively represented. To protect the interests of various groups, therefore, the Governor had to legislate for 'scheduled' or backward areas without reference to his Council. In the words of Sir Charles Dilke, his Council became, 'not a liberal institution, but a veiled oligarchy of the worst description'. Lugard also proposed the establishment of a Nigerian Council, similar to the General Council of the French West African Colonies, consisting of two lieutenant-Governors, the Administrator of Lagos, together with the three Secretaries, the Political Secretary, and other officials, under the Presidency of the Governor-General. There were also unofficial Members nominated by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce, the Calabar Chamber and the Chamber of Mines, in addition to eight others, no less than four of whom were to be Africans nominated by the Governor. The Lagos Legislative Council passed laws for the Colony, but these were first approved by the Governor. The Nigerian Council possessed neither executive nor legislative powers: it became an 'unpaid anthropological department' of the government.¹¹⁰

On 26th March, 1921, Sir Hugh Clifford, in a confidential despatch, drew the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to

the inadequacy of the machinery at present in existence in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria for the passing and criticism of legislation, for the scrutiny, by those whose

110. T.N. Tamuno, op.cit., p. 29.

interests are affected, of the financial affairs of the country, for authoritatively announcing and explaining the actions of the Government to the local public, and for enabling the latter to follow and understand them.¹¹¹

He subjected the Lugard constitution of 1913 to detailed criticism,¹¹² noting that

'.... the impotency and insignificance of the Council are so generally recognised that it is not now possible to restore to it such prestige as the Legislative Council of the Colony of Southern Nigeria formerly possessed, to galvanise it into any sort of activity or reality, or to awaken any public interest in its proceedings and deliberations. After attending a large number of its meetings, I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that this Legislative Council fails completely to fulfil the purpose for which such Bodies ordinarily established and maintained.¹¹³

The Legislative Council, he argued, whose competence was severely limited by clauses viii-xiii of the letters Patent of the 1913 constitution, had come to be regarded by the politically significant section of Southern Nigeria as 'little more than a debating society' whose resolutions were 'deprived of any save the merest academical interest'.¹¹⁴

As early as December 29th, 1919, Mr. McNeill, one of the commercial Members, had put on the agenda of the Nigerian Council the resolution

'That this Council be either reconstituted so as to make it a serious factor in the government of this Colony and Protectorate, or

111. Confidential despatch in C.O. 19595, C.O. 583/100, para. 1.

112. Ibid., para. 3-15.

113. Ibid., para. 3-4; at least, he seems to have accepted the N.C.B.W.A. contention that the Crown Colony system was an anachronism.

114. Ibid., para. 9.

else be abolished.' But at Sir Hugh's request Mr. McNeill refrained from pressing that resolution to a division, though both official and unofficial Members shared the latter's view of the Council.¹¹⁵

While admitting the inadequacy of the Government Gazette and of the local press for examining and discussing legislation, Sir Hugh was certain that

.... there is growing up among the more educated classes a feeling that the machinery in existence for the discussion of local affairs is wholly inadequate and that the Government occupies a position of untrammelled autocracy which is without a counterpart in other West African Colonies. That this is, in fact, the case cannot be gainsaid¹¹⁶

More significantly he added:

I am convinced that this state of things is opposed alike to the interest of the public and of the Government, and I think that an attempt should be made to find a remedy. Sooner or later the position must be recognised as intolerable by the more advanced sections of the indigenous population, and I suggest that it is preferable that the initiative in the matter of reform should be taken by the Government.¹¹⁷

His new scheme, he said, would be 'inevitably imperfect', and might not be very effective initially; nevertheless, it was 'a substantial advance on the existing system'. As more capable representatives became available, the new Legislative Council would become an important factor in the administration. It was with this end in view, said Sir Hugh, that he was putting forward his scheme to give fuller representation of local interests and to give a larger share in the discussion and management of public affairs 'to

115. Ibid., p. 6, para. 10-11.

116. Ibid., p. 8, para. 15.

117. Ibid., p. 8, para. 15; my emphasis.

articulate members of the various Nigerian communities' than were provided by existing institutions.

The new Legislative Council for the Southern Provinces would hold its sessions in Lagos, the principal commercial centre of Nigeria. To the extent that Sir Hugh did not find it practicable to include the Northern Provinces in the new scheme, his proposal, as he put it, was 'a compromise and a half measure'; in any case, he said, the backwardness of the Northern Provinces should not 'prevent the development of representative institutions in those parts of the Dependency where they already existed prior to the amalgamation' and where, if amalgamation had never taken place, those institutions would have been gradually extended as a matter of course. Objections to his new scheme, which involved the abolition of the old Legislative Council, he continued, would merely be in the nature of 'sentimental considerations', but these could be reconciled 'if special privileges were to be awarded to the Colony in the matter of its representation on the new Council', i.e. 'that on the new Council the Colony be represented by three elected and one nominated member'.¹¹⁸

The new Legislative Council was to be called The Legislative Council of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria and was to be constituted as follows:

118. Ibid., pp. 12-13, para. 25-26.

OFFICIAL

The Governor	1
The Members of the Executive Council	10
The Senior Residents	10
The Deputy Chief Secretary to Government	1
The Secretary, Northern Provinces	1
" " Southern "	1
The General Manager of the Railways	1
The Director of Public Works	1
The Postmaster General	1
	<u>27</u>

UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS

Members elected to represent the Colony	3
Member elected to represent Old Calabar ¹¹⁹	1
Members nominated respectively by the Chambers of Commerce of Lagos, Old Calabar and Kano	3
Member nominated by the local Chamber of Mines	1
" " " " Governor to represent the Colony outside Lagos municipal boundaries	1
Members nominated by the Governor to represent respectively Oyo, Abeokuta, Ijebu, Oudo and Benin, the Niger Delta and the Ibo country	6
Members nominated by the Governor to represent the Commercial, Banking and Shipping interests of Nigeria	3
	<u>18</u>

The franchise was to be granted to residents of the municipal area of Lagos who had a gross income of not less than £100. Sir Hugh was not sure whether the electors would be enthusiastic about the new scheme, but he was hopeful that the granting of the franchise to Lagos would not create much difficulty as the municipal area of Lagos was at once 'compact and populous, and the proportion of

119. Ibid., p. 15, para. 32; Old Calabar was accorded the privilege of electing one member, 'as the former capital of Southern Nigeria'.

educated persons among its inhabitants unusually large'.¹²⁰

Having surveyed his scheme, Sir Hugh recommended it with a slight Machiavellian touch:

The privilege of electing their own representatives is much sought after by politically minded persons in West Africa.. but the occupation of seats on a Legislative Council by local demagogues would tend to imbue them with a sense of responsibility which they do not feel so long as they are able to spread all manner of mischievous rumours among an ignorant population without incurring the risk of being publicly brought to account therefor.¹²¹ I consider that the experiment is one that should be tried.

Meanwhile in London, the Colonial Office was studying Sir Hugh's scheme before discussing it with him during his leave in England in June. A. Harding, one of the senior officials disagreed with nearly all of Sir Hugh's points. He believed that though the Nigerian Council could be criticised as little more than a debating society, it could fulfil its functions as well as a Legislative Council, if only it met oftener. Harding would dispense with unofficial members as 'experience has shown', he said, 'that little useful advice is obtainable in Nigeria by the Government except from officials....'¹²² He also criticised Sir Hugh's argument that to explain government policy it was necessary to enlarge the Legislative Council and publish its proceedings in a government Hansard. He recalled that when Sir Hugh was Governor of the Gold Coast he 'induced the Secretary of State to alter and considerably enlarge the Legislative Council in order to provide a larger audience for

120. Ibid., p. 14, para. 29.

121. Ibid., pp. 14-15, para. 29.

122. Ibid., minute by A. Harding, 2/6/1921.

his speeches and deliveries....' and that Guggisberg was now finding it difficult to communicate with local opinion. Sir Hugh's difficulty, he said, was that he was 'looking at the Gold Coast through magnifying spectacles, and thinking that the result is the same as Nigeria, and that the Northern Provinces are merely a larger edition of Ashanti and the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast'.¹²³ Lagos, in his view, should not be represented by three elected members, as the electors were not even taking interest in the Municipal Council. He concluded his minute:

It is not all clear to me what good would really be served by making the proposed changes in present circumstances. When a popular demand comes for further representative institutions, then would be the time to give them. At present representative institutions cannot possibly in Nigeria be in the very least representative: the material is not there, and if it were, communications are so imperfect, and the country so large, that meetings of representatives from all over Nigeria cannot be held except once in a blue moon.... It seems to me that all the advantages lie in the direction of carrying on for the present time under the existing Constitution. In a few years' time it may be possible to do something in the direction of enlarging the scope and membership of the Legislative Council, but till then, its impotence, which so grieves the Governor, is in practice, a considerable asset to the Government of the country....¹²⁴

Sir H. Read thought that the 'most expeditious' method of settling the problems posed by Sir Hugh's reform proposal would be for Harding, Wood and himself to 'discuss the matter personally with Sir Hugh Clifford' when the latter would be on leave in England.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid. Harding's advocacy of the policy of muddling through can perhaps be explained by the fact that he was absent from the Colonial Office when the London Committee of the N.C.B.W.A. unsuccessfully tried to educate English public opinion on elective representation.

On the afternoon of June 10th, Wood, Harding and Sir H. Read reported to Sir George Fiddes and Winston Churchill that the reform proposals had been discussed with Sir Hugh Clifford that afternoon,¹²⁵ and that the latter had 'pressed for his proposals being adopted so that they could come into force towards the end of this year or early next and that they should not be postponed for a few years or until a popular demand for such a change arose'.¹²⁶

On the question of nominating unofficial members for the Provinces of Oyo, Abeokuta, Ijebu, Oudo and Benin, the Niger Delta and the Ibo country, Sir Hugh thought nomination with regard to possible persons available would be a convenient method but insisted that Oyo and Abeokuta should have representatives, as he could find suitable English-speaking African merchants acceptable as representatives to the Alafin and the Alake respectively. He also insisted on the preparation of the draft instruments to implement his proposals, the details of which could be discussed later.¹²⁷

On June 16th, 1921, Sir H. Read instructed that the Instruments be prepared, and on the 18th, Wood informed Churchill about the discussions with Sir Hugh Clifford, adding that the Colonial Office had 'agreed in substance to his proposals', and had also proposed the preparation of the draft instruments for further discussion with Sir Hugh. Between July and September 1921 draft Orders in Council and Letters Patent for the new Constitution were made by

125. Minute to C.O. 19595; C.O. 583/100.

126. Ibid., my emphasis.

127. Ibid.

the Colonial Office and a copy sent to Sir Hugh on October 24th for his observations and criticisms.

By December 1921 the revised drafts of the new Nigerian Constitution were completed, under the scrutiny of Risley and Harding, the latter retaining his scepticism throughout.¹²⁸ Harding commented that the minutes to C.O. 19595/21, in which Sir Hugh Clifford's proposals were discussed did 'not contain any definite decision of the Secretary of State to approve Sir H. Clifford's proposed reorganisation of Nigeria's legislative arrangements', that the adoption of the elective principle in the new Legislative Council of Nigeria, though confined to Lagos and Calabar, might lead to demand for similar institutions in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, and that it was 'not quite easy' to reconcile the present policy of limited change with Lord Milner's reply to the N.C.B.W.A. delegation on January 26th, 1921.¹²⁹ Clearly, Harding was sticking to Milner's policy earlier that year; after all, Churchill too was known to be opposed to constitutional reform for West Africa. Yet, in the same minutes Sir Herbert Read dismissed Harding's objections and opted for the Cliffordian reforms,¹³⁰ saying that as far as the minutes to C.O. 19595/21 were concerned, the decision rested with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. As for Harding's fear that the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone would demand reforms similar to Nigeria's, Sir Herbert Read thought that it had been proposed 'to

128. Minute to C.O. 63185/ 21/12/1921; C.O. 583/106.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.; 'I would suggest that the scheme should be proceeded with'.

apply the elective principle on a very restricted scale in Nigeria, and if Sierra Leone and Gold Coast desire similar treatment, there seems to be no reason why it should not be given'.¹³¹ As to the view that the new policy contradicted that of Lord Milner, Sir Herbert Read thought that Harding need not worry about that, 'in view of the limited extent to which election is being introduced'.

It appears, however, that although by January 1922 the Cliffordian reforms had been approved by the Colonial Office, a few of the senior officials, who were against reforms, led by Harding, had succeeded in putting their views to Churchill. For in the despatch to Clifford on the new constitution, Churchill reluctantly accepted Clifford's scheme, as is seen from para. 2 of his despatch:

I do not think it is possible, in the present circumstances of Nigeria as regards educational, political and commercial development and means of communication, to set up a Legislative Council which could be regarded as in any sense really representative of the inhabitants of even the Colony and Southern Provinces of the Protectorate. Nor do I think that such a Legislative Council could be secured for many years to come.... The question has however been discussed with you during your recent leave in England; and you are I understand satisfied that the advantages which the Nigerian Government will gain by the arrangements which you propose will on the whole outweigh the disadvantages. I am not therefore prepared to reject your proposals and I have caused to be prepared drafts of Instruments for carrying them into effect.¹³²

Eventually Sir Hugh got his Constitution, but took exception to para. 2 of Churchill's despatch and to the reluctance of the Colonial Office to accept the title (Council of Government) he had given to his new Council.¹³³ He also drew Churchill's attention to the

131. Ibid.; my emphasis.

132. Ibid., despatch in C.O. 63185/21Nig.; The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria.

133. Despatch contained in Confidential C.O. 36669; C.O. 583/111.

'considerable measure of reluctance' the former had accorded his reform proposals, in spite of his experience of local conditions in Nigeria, adding that his scheme, given the conditions in Nigeria, was 'the best that can at present time be devised'. He went on to argue that the creation of a new Legislative Council was 'at least as desirable, if judged exclusively from the standpoint of the advantages which will accrue therefrom to the Government, as it is if gauged solely from the point of view of the more advanced sections of the indigenous communities of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria'. Not only would his scheme make officials more accountable, it would also be useful in 'exposing and dispelling mischievous rumours and reports' spread by 'astute and unscrupulous folk who are dealing with very ignorant and incredibly credulous people, among whom they desire only to stir up discontent and disaffection.¹³⁴ As for the nationalists in the Southern Provinces, said Sir Hugh, his new scheme would be hailed by many of them as a 'removal of the menace to all chance or prospect of their natural political growth.... The privilege of electing their own representatives to occupy seats on the Council will, in theory at any rate, be very highly prized by them....', though he was certain that the nationalists would have to find some means of making the 'bulk of the unpolitically minded among the electors' interested in local elections. In any case, a Legislative Council would sober up the demagogues who would now

¹³⁴. Ibid., p.3, para. 3. Tamuno notes that 'Lagos was considerably quieter after 1923; and at the conclusion of the fourth session of the N.C.B.W.A. at Lagos in 1930, the Congress as far as Lagos was concerned, became a fast dying body....' op. cit., p.31. In fact by 1926 only a few dedicated individuals in Lagos took interest in the affairs of the N.C.B.W.A. Clifford's political anaesthetic largely succeeded in centering 'politics' on the Legislative and Town Councils.

have less exciting tasks. He had tried that policy in the Gold Coast, he said, and it had been a 'complete success', but the problem in Nigeria was how to 'devise a scheme which, while allowing the natural political development of the more Europeanised communities of the South to proceed without undue restraint, would protect the autonomy enjoyed by the Native Administrations....',¹³⁵

Although Sir Hugh was uncertain as to whether his scheme would succeed in harmonising the contradictions of the Lugardian system, he felt strongly that the authorisation of his scheme was 'right in principle', adding that 'the creation of the new Council will tend to satisfy legitimate aspirations and ambitions; that it will fulfil useful and practical purposes; that it will eventually prove to be susceptible to progressive reforms and improvements, and that it will help to produce a healthier political atmosphere throughout the principal centres in the Southern Povvinces'.¹³⁶ He made it clear, however, that he was certain that Churchill was 'only partially convinced' of the expediency of his proposals,¹³⁷ to which Harding replied that there was nothing in Churchill's despatch of 63185/21 to justify the view that he approved Clifford's scheme 'with a considerable measure of reluctance'; all Churchill did, he said, was to express doubts about its feasibility. Sir Hugh, said Harding, was implying publicly that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was 'opposed to representative institutions in West Africa',

135. Paras. 4-5 of despatch in C.O. 36669; C.O. 583/111.

136. Pp. 6-7, *ibid.*

137. P. 7, para. 6, *ibid.*

whereas what the Secretary of State really meant was that such institutions could only serve the interests of the educated Africans.¹³⁸ On balance, however, it seems that Sir Hugh had come to realise, equally reluctantly, that things had changed since 1914 and that the Lugardian edifice needed slight, albeit reverential, readjustment to post-war conditions. Clifford had not forgotten that he had opposed the nationalists in Ceylon on the same issue between 1907 and 1912, using almost exactly the same arguments he used in 1920,¹³⁹ and had lost: why should he now oppose reforms he himself considered both 'necessary' and 'right in principle'?

The question will be asked: Was the granting of the elective principle due to pressure exerted by the N.C.B.W.A. i.e. was Clifford compelled or 'encouraged' to concede the constitutional

138. Ibid., Memorandum by Harding; Lugard's remarks on the 'educated African' (The Dual Mandate, pp. 79-90) were quoted by Harding to illustrate his point. See also Lugard's view on the question in Representative Forms of Government and 'Indirect Rule' in British Africa (Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1928). Lugard seems to have envisaged an indefinite continuation of the system allowing only for elected councils in the coastal towns; of the Cliffordian reforms he said: 'The action of the Colonial Office in first consenting to the creation of this Council and the restriction of the powers of the Legislative Council to the colony, and then revising the policy without any local demand or evidence of the need of such a course, and the introduction of the elective principle which Lord Milner had declared to be premature, was not in accord with its role of maintaining continuity.' p.16, footnote 2. For further discussion of the problem of representative government and indirect rule see Lord Hailey: An African Survey (1st Edition, 1938), pp.134-135, also Bryan Keith Lucas: 'The Dilemma of Local Government in Africa', pp.194-195 in Essays in Imperial Government Presented to Margery Perham by Kenneth Robinson and F. Madden (Oxford, 1963); especially Dennis Austin: West Africa and the Commonwealth (Penguin, 1957), pp.77-82.

139. H.J. Hulugalle: British Governors of Ceylon (Colombo, 1963), Ch.XXIV.

demands of the N.C.B.W.A.? The answer is yes. Did Clifford, acting on his own initiative, dish the N.C.B.W.A. by secretly recommending a limited franchise? The answer is still yes: at any rate, he thought he was doing so. The problem is one that has not been satisfactorily answered by historians so far. Martin Wight concludes that 'It (the Congress) had no direct effect, but it crystallized demands which received partial fulfilment in the Constitution of 1925....'.¹⁴⁰ Padmore dismisses the Congress from an a priori Marxian viewpoint: its failure was 'inevitable', because it lacked 'the active support of the plebeian masses, especially the peasantry....'.¹⁴¹ D. Kimble's work, understandably, is too preoccupied with the Gold Coast aspects of the Congress to shed more light on the question.¹⁴² K.A.B. Jones-Quartey is not sure whether the question should be answered:

Three years later elective representation did come to West Africa for the first time, though on a strictly limited franchise, as it was bound to do.... Was this reform due in large part to the Congress movement and the efforts of Casely Hayford and his tenacious fighters for freedom? It is not for this paper to answer that question categorically.¹⁴³

Dr. T.N. Tamuno makes some interesting guesses as to the genesis of the 1922 Constitution; unfortunately, his book appeared before the partial relaxation of the 50-year rule.¹⁴⁴ Miss La Ray Denzer's

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140. Martin Wight: The Gold Coast Legislative Council (Faber and Faber, London, 1947), p. 27.
141. G. Padmore: The Gold Coast Revolution (London, 1953), pp. 52-53.
142. It must be added, however, that the volumes containing Clifford's despatches were not available to researchers when Kimble completed his work on the Gold Coast.
143. K.A.B. Jones-Quartey: 'Thought and Expression in the Gold Coast Press: 1874-1930. Pt. II', UNIVERSITAS (University of Ghana), vol. III, No. 4, Dec. 1958, p. 116.
144. T.N. Tamuno, op.cit., pp. 25-31. The author drew Dr. Tamuno's attention to the Clifford despatches in July, 1966.

thesis correctly assesses the weaknesses of the N.C.B.W.A., but does not attempt an explanation of its role in the introduction of the elective principle.¹⁴⁵

W.E.G. Sekyi, a contemporary and a participant assessed the Congress' influence thus:

.... there can be no doubt that the terror which this movement inspired in the hearts of Sir Hugh Clifford and his supporters led him to recommend a form of elective representation for West Africa, which the various Governors have each stamped with his own individuality and capacity to understand African aspirations aright.¹⁴⁶

The West African press, almost without exception, claimed that Clifford's volte face was the direct result of Congress agitation. The Lagos Weekly Record interpreted the 1922 Constitution as a pis-aller hastily construed to dish the agitators and steal a march on the progressive Guggisberg of the Gold Coast:

.... But stranger things were yet to happen; for Sir Hugh Clifford who had antagonised the National Congress of British West Africa at its birth and had ridiculed its advocacy of the introduction of the franchise as 'loose and gaseous talk' suddenly underwent a political metamorphosis and became a great protagonist of the scheme of elective representation, despite the parrot cries of a certain section of the community which had taken up Sir Hugh's jeremiad that Nigeria was still unripe for representative Government and reviewing the situation at this distance of time, one is almost tempted to surmise that Sir Hugh rushed through the Nigerian scheme, presumably as a necessary expedient for taking the wind out of Sir Gordon's sails and forestalling the Gold Coast in the grant of the franchise, for up to his departure from Nigeria Sir Hugh had not been able to explain satisfactorily to his critics his sudden conversion; the result inevitably was that the Nigerian

145. La Ray Denzer, op.cit. Her thesis is mainly concerned with emphasising 'the African influences of both traditional culture and status which produced the nationalistic thought expounded by the delegates'. Preface.

146. W.E.G. Sekyi: 'On Some Recent Movements in West Africa: A Study of White Methods of Repression'. The Gold Coast Times, 23/5/1931, pp. 7-8.

constitution - hastily improvised by Sir Hugh without any previous consultation with the progressive elements of the community or acknowledged leaders of the people - stands today as the least liberal in outlook by its overwhelming official majority which has practically nullified the benefits intended to be conferred by the franchise....¹⁴⁷

The Weekly Record, though generally a radical paper in Lagos politics, was not always noted for the accuracy of its political judgments; but, as our account of the making of the 1922 Constitution has shown, its view that Clifford took the wind out of the Congress sails by initiating the reforms, is correct. Also, its view that Clifford 'rushed through the Nigerian scheme.... as a necessary expedient', without consulting any 'public opinion', is substantially correct. Why Sir Hugh found it necessary to rush through the scheme is not clear, for that same year the Congress had suffered a severe defeat in London; on the other hand, Clifford could have rushed through the scheme with an eye to the possible unrest which might result from the slump in 1921. Whatever the factors involved, he had to do something.

Perhaps the most realistic assessment of the relative influence exercised by the N.C.B.W.A. in the introduction of the elective principle is that by Dr. T.O. Elias:

.... But having thus effectively thwarted their cherished ambition in Britain, Clifford was quick to sense the gathering storm on the political horizon. He accordingly proceeded to dismantle Lugard's edifice of the Nigerian Council which, together with the old Legislative Council, he finally abolished in 1922, replacing both by a single Legislative and a new Executive Council.¹⁴⁸

147. The Lagos Weekly Record, 16/11/1926: Elective Representation in British West Africa: A Comparison between the Gold Coast and Nigerian Constitutions, pp. 5-9.

148. T.O. Elias: Makers of Nigerian Law quoted in K. Ezera, op.cit., p. 26; also O.I. Odumosu: The Nigerian Constitution: History and Development (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1963), pp. 15-16.

Most of these interpretations, however, suffer from too much emphasis on the institutional aspects of the decision-making process which resulted in the creation of the 1922 Constitution. Sir Hugh's public speeches do not give an accurate indication of his motives; and, so far, writers have not taken into account the influence which such a powerful personality as Sir Hugh's could have on policy making at the Colonial Office. He was aristocratic, very able, hardworking, shrewd, yet paternalistic, though he never allowed race to influence his judgment. A disciple of Kipling (whose poems he is said to have read frequently to his guests at his parties), and a romantic who had entered the service of the British Raj in the Far East at a very early age, Sir Hugh honestly believed that he 'understood' the people he governed and was consequently always at loggerheads with the educated 'middle class' nationalists who presumed to initiate change.¹⁴⁹

But decision-making is never a final act or a one-way process. To picture Sir Hugh as an omniscient and liberal-minded Governor benignly handing down a constitution to vociferous nationalists, as Ezera does,¹⁵⁰ or to portray the Congress forcing a colonial autocrat to yield to its demands, is perhaps to ignore the complex reality of political processes. We have shown that the whole issue was made complex by the active participation of people and interests (both

149. The most useful account the author has seen of Sir Hugh's philosophy of colonial rule and of his personality is the one by H.J. Hulugalle, British Governors of Ceylon (Colombo, 1963), Ch. XXIV. See also the comments on Sir Hugh in The Times Literary Supplement, 1967, February. So far, there is no biography of Sir Hugh. Lady Holmes (his sister) informs me that Sir Hugh's papers were destroyed or lost in 1942.

150. K. Ezera, op.cit., p. 27.

economic and humanitarian interest groups) whose influence cannot easily be measured. That the London Committee exerted some influence on the Colonial Office and, in spite of his hostility, on Sir Hugh himself, cannot be gainsaid. That commercial interests also exerted some influence is also clear from the interest shown in the matter by the Liverpool Association of African Merchants,¹⁵¹ commercial papers like West Africa and The African World, as well as Sir Hugh's long argument with Lord Leverhulme on economic questions which were in fact political ones.¹⁵² It was also an unofficial Member representing commercial interests who first tabled a motion in the Nigerian Council for the reconstitution

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151. Sir Hugh Clifford himself admitted the influence commercial bodies (extra-territorial) could exert on colonial governments: 'As matters stand today, almost the only criticism of the actions of the Government, which is able in any degree to make itself felt, emanates from the Chambers of Commerce in London, Liverpool or Manchester or from the Association of African Merchants in Liverpool, and these bodies concentrate their scrutiny almost exclusively upon matters that affect or are believed likely to affect commercial interests.' Para. 14 of despatch in Nig. Conf. C.O. 19595; C.O. 583/100. See also J. Wheare, op.cit., pp. 81-83, 108. The extra-territorial interests would not be interested in politics 'per se' but would certainly be interested in the financial arrangements of the Constitution, how far unofficial members could discuss economic and financial questions, fiscal and economic controls etc. See Mining, Commerce and Finance in Nigeria (Faber and Faber, 1948), ed. M. Perham, p. 46; also Sir George V. Fiddes: The Dominions and Colonial Offices (London, 1926), p. 153. Fiddes was Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1916 to 1921.
152. Sir Hugh Clifford's speech in the African Trade Section at the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in which he denied Lord Leverhulme's view that government in West Africa was autocratic and bureaucratic; he also argued that self-government for British West Africa 'would not add to the security of English capital or to the expansion of their commerce.' Times, 28/8/1923, p. 7. See also W.K. Hancock: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: vol. II, Problems of Economic Policy 1918-1939 (O.U.P., 1942), pp. 190-194.

or abolition of that body.¹⁵³ The Association of African Merchants did in fact seek, and were granted, an interview with the Colonial Office in early 1921 on questions directly connected with the proposed constitutional reforms.

It is clear from the despatches that Sir Hugh actually persuaded, almost compelled, the Colonial Office, which did not believe in the introduction of the elective principle to West Africa at that time, to accept his draft constitution with provision for three elected members; moreover, he persuaded an unwilling Churchill and equally unwilling senior officials to prepare the necessary instruments for his Constitution by a particular date. And it is also clear that Churchill reluctantly accepted Sir Hugh's Constitution in deference to the latter's authority and experience. Sir Hugh in turn makes it plain in his despatches that his constitutional changes were partly intended to keep the 'local demagogues' quiet; there are indications also that the 'feeling' of 'the more educated classes' and of 'the more advanced sections of the indigenous population' was a factor which affected his decision. Those who tend to see constitutional 'development' as a series of decisions, may perhaps note, as Dr. S.C. Ghosh reminds us, that 'Decision is a choice between two alternatives that cause a conflict; it is the solution of a clash; it is the deliberate end of a conflict. Such conflicts are rare, and they are episodes in the process of growing and maturing rather than in the process of ruling and of

153. Despatch in C.O. 19595; C.O. 583/100, p. 6; J. Wheare, op.cit., p.30. The financial arrangements of the Lugard constitution were most unsatisfactory, vide despatch by Clifford 583/19595/100.

policy determinations.¹⁵⁴ From the moment the elective principle was conceded, its application to the other territories (except the Gambia) was automatic - Sierra Leone (1924) and the Gold Coast (1925): bis dat qui cito dat. And although we may not always agree with Mill's views on colonialism and representative government, he gave an accurate summary of this conflict when he argued:

The willingness of the people to accept representative government only become a practical question when an enlightened ruler, or a foreign nation or nations who have gained power over the country, are disposed to offer it the boon. To individual reformers the question is almost irrelevant since, if no other objection can be made to their enterprise than that the opinion of the nation is not yet on their side, they have the ready and proper answer, that to bring it over to their side is the very end they aim at.¹⁵⁵

For Sir Hugh and for the leaders of the N.C.B.W.A., elective representation had become 'a practical question' in 1920-21, as Sir Hugh himself admitted less than a year after he had publicly pronounced their unfitness for such institutions. For liberalism, according to Hobhouse, is concerned with civil, fiscal, personal, social, economic, domestic, racial, national and international liberties and creates demands for political liberty and popular sovereignty,¹⁵⁶ and it was this liberalism of 'bourgeois colonial society' that the Congress leaders had imbibed. To deny its application to them, merely because they were unrepresentative of the whole population did not make sense, either to Sir Hugh or to

154. S.C. Ghosh: "Decision-Making and Power in the British Conservative Party: A Case Study of the Indian Problem 1929-34" Political Studies, vol. XIII, 1965, pp.198-212.

155. J.S. Mill: Considerations On Representative Government (London, 1905), Ch. IV, p.68.

156. L.T. Hobhouse: Liberalism (H.U.L., 1911), pp.21-49, sections 1-9.

the Colonial Office.

As for the Congress movement, it is easy to dismiss it as an itinerant seminar of the West African nationalist elite and its Sessions as ineffective congregations of a frustrated and outmoded intelligentsia; or to picture its leaders as outmoded nationalists preaching doctrines inherited from mid-Victorian anti-imperialism and advocating a liberal democracy of which a chastened Europe was becoming sceptical.¹⁵⁷ But it would be wrong to conclude that its influence on the changes that took place in West Africa between 1923 and 1927 was negligible. Politically, its agitation not only jolted the Governors out of the easy-going days of the pre-War period; it also precipitated and, in a sense, caused to be introduced, the limited reforms of 1922-1926. As an early pan-African association, its history provides interesting examples of the problems, personalities and idealism characteristic of such pan-movements. At any rate, another generation of West Africans, notably Nnamdi Azikiwe,

157. Miss La Ray Denzer, op.cit. sees them as old fashioned black Victorians vainly trying to have their load of the White Man's burden, pp. 2-3. She does indeed mention the change of policy towards the beginning of the twentieth century which made increasing use of chiefs in the system of indirect rule (which meant that the 'educated African' would have the worst of both worlds), but does not relate this to the important socio-economic and technological changes which took place in Europe and which directly affected imperial attitudes. See R.Delavignette: Christianity and Colonialism (London, 1964), pp.43-46. For an account of the ways in which European concepts like authority and liberty were transplanted to the colonies and subsequently distorted or adopted, see Wolfgang Kraus: 'Authority, Progress and Colonialism', pp.151-156 in Authority, NOMOS I, ed. C.J. Friedrich (Harvard University Press, 1958); Rene Maunier: The Sociology of Colonies, vols. I and II (especially vol. I), especially vol. I), edited and translated by E.O. Lörimer (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949).

Wallace Johnson and Kwame Nkrumah, was to gain much inspiration and insight from its history. The agitation of the N.C.B.W.A. also marked a crucial stage in the political evolution of British West Africa; the constitutional reforms it achieved, though limited and imperfect in some cases, led to a period of stability which was only marred by the economic depression of the 1930s. The period of stability up to the outbreak of World War II was largely the result of the partial fulfilment of the reforms demanded by the N.C.B.W.A.,¹⁵⁸ and it was these reforms that paved the way for peaceful constitutional change after 1945. Ironically, it was the Gambia, which did not benefit from the 1922-1926 reforms, that was to be granted one of the most liberal of the West African constitutions in 1947.¹⁵⁹ Yet, without the moderate 'agitators' of 1920-1930 it is arguable that these developments would have

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158. Commenting on the Cliffordian reforms, Sir Bernard Bourdillon stated in 1939: 'I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that Sir Hugh Clifford's anticipations have been fulfilled, and that the Legislative Council has been an exceedingly useful body. But it cannot last its present form, and I feel that something more revolutionary than "progressive reforms and improvement" will almost certainly be necessary...' Nigeria: Memorandum on future political development (1939), para. 14, p. 8.
159. Leading Gambian politicians recognised this advance made by the 1947 or Backworth-Wright Constitution, particularly when they compared it with the 1951 Wyn Harris Constitution: letter from the Hon. and Rev. John C. Faye, M.B.E. to the Hon. Henry Madi, J.P., 21/11/1953, para. ii, and pp. 2-4: "Development of Constitutional Government in the Gambia" by the Rev. J.C. Faye, M.B.E. See also Petition to Sir Edward Windley, K.C.M.G..... In Connection with Sessional Paper No.4 of 1959 on Constitutional Development in the Gambia, para. b.

come much later.¹⁶⁰ The constitutional gains achieved between 1923 and 1946-47 give much justification to Casely Hayford's moderate and sound advice to the conservative Pan-Africanists of the 1920's: 'Be Constitutional'.

160. This process of constitutional evolution is lucidly described by Dennis Austin in West Africa and the Commonwealth (Penguin, 1957), pp. 68-72.

CHAPTER VII

PAN-NEGRO THOUGHT AND POLITICS OF FRENCH AFRICANS, 1924-1935

"The story, the spirit of Pan-Africanism, although originating in America and France, was brought to our country by a man whose name and memory (I should like to recall here. I am speaking of Marc Kodjo Tovoallo Queno, who - as an authentic African forerunner of the movement - claimed his negritude even before the word was coined. He brought us to know Marcus Garvey, Dr. Du Bois, and so many others; when I was a child I heard my parents speak of these names and evoke these problems. That is to say, if the first sketch of this movement was begun in America and Paris, it had, before it was public, P A R T III percussions and an extension in Africa."¹

Histories of the Pan-African movement have usually depended so heavily on the partisan accounts of Du Bois and Padmore, and have put so much emphasis on the ritual of the Du Boisian Congresses between 1919 and 1927, that the view has been accepted that prior to 1945 French Negroes had never taken active interest in political Pan-Africanism. Nearly all histories of Pan-Africanism have confined their attention (as far as French Negroes are concerned) to the theory of negritude evolved by Leopold Senghor, Jean Price Mars and Aime Cesaire in Paris in the 1930s.² In this chapter, an

1. [Dr. Baile Zinsou, Secretary of the African Federation Party, Dahomey in Pan-Africanism Reconsidered, ed. American Society of African Culture, University of California Press, 1962], p. 74. Dr. Zinsou is at present Dahomey's Foreign Minister.
2. Even the two standard works on the subject suffer from this defect. P. Decraene: Le Panafricanisme (Presses Universitaires de France, 1959). Colin Legum: Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide (Praeger, N.Y., 1965). Padmore's Pan-Africanism or Communism devotes only a few lines to it, while Du Bois is completely silent on the subject.

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attempt will be made to show that (1) French African participation in the Pan-African movement after 1921 was not negligible but was very active, was political, and was closely following not only the activities of Pan-Negro groups in America but also the nationalist politics of organisations, based in Paris, of North Africa and Indo-China. (2) There were several Negro political organisations in Paris between 1924 and 1936³ with varying degrees of political orientation, among which, in the author's view, the most important was the Ligue Universelle pour la défense de la Race Noire of

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As far as the author is aware, only Professor George Shepperson, the leading authority on the historical study of Pan-Africanism, has drawn attention to the possibility of studying French Pan-Negro groups as part of the Pan-African movement of the 1920s and 1930s - see G. Shepperson: "Pan-Africanism and "Pan-Africanism": Some Historical Notes", Phylon, vol. 23, 1962, pp. 355-356. Professor Shepperson, however, confines his attention to the roles of Blaise Diagne and Gratien Candace in the period 1919-1921, and states that "If French-speaking African participation in the Pan-African movement seems to have been negligible from 1921 until after the 1945 Manchester Congress, the emergence of negritude in the 1930's indicated that they were making a distinct contribution to cultural pan-Africanism...." *ibid.*, p. 356.

3. Mr. James Speigler of Nuffield College, Oxford, is in the process of completing a dissertation of French African political organisations in Paris in the inter-war period. My concentration on the Ligue and its two successors by no means implies that other Negro groups were unimportant. The Ligue has been chosen for detailed investigation because in the author's view, it seemed the most Pan-African in outlook and in its politics, it claimed to be neutral in French politics; it was critical of French assimilationist policy and of French colonial policy in general; it was led by French West Indian and African intellectuals of various political orientations who were extremely hostile to Diagne and Candace, and finally because it encouraged and opposed Communist sympathies at various times during its turbulent existence between 1924 and 1936. The material used in this chapter, and the conclusions reached, are wholly independent of the study being undertaken by Mr. Speigler. At no one time was any work done by Mr. Speigler consulted by the author.

Tovalou Houénou, and the two other organisations - the Comité de la défense de la Race Nègre (C.D.R.N.) led by the Senegalese Lamine Senghore and the Ligue de la défense de la Race Nègre (L.D.R.N.) led by Tiémoho Garan-Kouyaté (Soudan) and Abdou Koité (Soudan) respectively - which succeeded it from 1925 to 1936. (3) There was a radical group of French Negro West Indian and African intellectuals and ex-servicemen in Paris in the 1920's and 1930's, from whose ranks the leadership of the Ligue was recruited, which had serious doubt about the desirability of assimilation and who attempted to replace Negro deputies like Diagne and Candace by Negro deputies more in line with their Pan-Negro sympathies. (4) Finally, that this group subscribed to the current Pan-African dream of establishing a Negro State in Africa as a solution to the racial and colonial problem, although it acknowledged differences in the social and political condition of American and French Negroes. The origins of the theory of negritude are not dealt with in this study, as the subject has already been adequately dealt with recently.⁴

In the French empire, as in the British empire, the end of the Great War witnessed many new problems, among which one of the most important, to French Negro intellectuals in Paris at any rate, was a re-examination of the rather delicate policy of assimilation, and

4. See Jacques Louis Hymans: "French Influences on Leopold Senghor's Theory of Negritude: 1928-48", Race, vol. 7, 1965-66, pp. 365-370. Lilyane Kesteloot: Ecrivains Noirs de Langue Française: naissance d'une littérature (2nd edition, Bruxelles, 1965); Abiola Irele: "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism", Journal of Modern African Studies, vol. III, 1965, pp. 321-348. Also of some interest is the article in Ethics, vol. LXXVI, no.4, July, 1966, pp. 267-275 by Bentley Le Baron: "Negritude: A Pan-African Ideal?"

of political representation of the colonies in the Metropolitan parliament. Prior to the outbreak of the War and during the War, these questions had not been brought to the level of serious debate. At that time, the representation of the colonies by such Negro deputies as Blaise Diagne and Gratien Candace was deemed satisfactory and Diagne, by virtue of the high offices he held in the French Government, had come to symbolise for the Negroes how far their aspirations could be satisfied in the French empire, and for the Europeans, that incredible phenomenon of an ambitious, able and responsible African politician playing the game as any Machiavellian would have done. The end of the war and demobilisation of French Negro troops, led to a strong feeling of disillusionment and dissatisfaction among the Negroes. Whether, or how far, American Negro troops or the bad treatment of American Negro troops by white American soldiers had affected the attitude of French Negro soldiers, is not known. What is known is that during the war some of them had mutinied and that after the war they condemned some of the methods of recruitment into the army. Diagne was specially singled out for attack; he was even accused of accepting a commission for Negro soldiers he had recruited. Evidently recruitment had not proceeded as smoothly as the French Government had made it appear to the world. It was also evident, as has often been said, that Europe emerged from her civil war less civilised in the eyes of her subject races. Had not Negro troops fought in Europe and had they not helped France to occupy an already humiliated Germany? Surely, they argued, Negroes deserved a better place in the French empire after the

war than a half-hearted policy of assimilation and an unreal representation of Negro interests by Negro deputies who, they alleged, had betrayed the interests of French Negroes? How could they, so the argument ran, reconcile a Colonial France with the 'democracy' and 'civilisation' they had just fought to preserve? Was there not a contradiction between a Colonial, and therefore oppressive, France and the France of 1789?

These were some of the questions being asked by disillusioned French Negroes in Paris after the war, and although Diagne was still popular in the empire after the war, he had become in the 20s and 30s the most unpopular Negro among radical and nationalistic Negro intellectual circles in Paris, and among a few African politicians and intellectuals like Lamine Gueye and N.S. Galandou Diouf who were now challenging his political power in the Senegal.⁵ These Negro critics of Diagne were joined by other Negro intellectuals who had migrated to Paris in the 1920s.⁶ Even with the formation

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5. For a general background to the interaction of French and Senegalese politics (the 'metropolitan axis of reference') in the period before 1940 see the informative article by G. Wesley Johnson: "The Ascendancy of Blaise Diagne And The Beginning of African Politics in Senegal", Africa, vol. XXXVI, July 1966, no.3, pp. 235-253. Dr. Johnson's forthcoming book will be on Senegalese politics to 1940. Also Thomas Hodgkin: "Background to A.O.F.:2 - The Metropolitan Axis" and "Background to A.O.F.:3 - African Reactions to French Rule" in West Africa, Jan. 9 and Jan. 16, 1954, pp. 5-6, 31-32. For some of Diagne's views on colonial and political questions see C. Cros: La Parole est a M. Blaise Diagne, premier homme d'Etat africain (Chez l'Auteur, 1961). For French assimilation theory and policy see M.D. Lewis "The Assimilation Theory in French Colonial Policy", Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. IV, 1962, pp. 129-153, and Michael Crowder: Senegal: A Study in French assimilation policy (London, Institute of Race Relations, 1962). For the scale of the opposition to Diagne, as reflected in the Senegalese press, see the useful bibliographical article by Mme. Marguerite Boulegue: "La Presse Au Senegal Avant 1939. Bibliographie", Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., T. XXVII, Ser. B, nos. 3-4, 1965, pp. 715-750.
 6. G. Wesley Johnson: "Blaise Diagne: Master Politician of Senegal". Tarikh, 1966, vol. 1, no.2, pp. 54-56.

of the Association Panafricaine led by Diagne, Candace and Du Bois in Paris after the 1921 Pan-African Congress session, Diagne and Candace had already earned the contempt of this radical Negro group when they publicly dissociated themselves from Garveyism and proclaimed that they were Frenchmen first and Negroes afterwards.⁷ That such a group of French Negroes existed which was opposed to the gallicly flavoured and dubious Pan-Africanism of Candace and Diagne is confirmed by M. Lamine Guéye, veteran politician and Senegal's eldest statesman, who was in Paris in 1921 to present his thesis for the doctorate in law at the University of Paris:

"Des Noirs américains, sous l'égide du Docteur Burghardt Du Bois, mais dont quelques éléments minoritaires semblaient partager les opinions de Marcus Garvey, s'y sont rencontrés avec des Haïtiens tels que M^e. Vilcus Gervais, avocat au Barreau de Port-au-Prince, les docteurs Clément Lanier, Couba, Sajous; des Antillais dont Gratien Candace, député de la Guadeloupe; Isaac Beton, professeur au Lycée Saint-Louis, à Paris; Jules Alcandre, avocat à la cour d'appel de Paris; des jeunes universitaires et anciens combattants arborant des décorations qui en disaient long sur la qualité de leurs services dans l'armée..."⁸ Dr. Léo Sajous (Haiti), Andre Beton (son of the Isaac Beton mentioned by M. Guéye), and some of the young university students and ex-servicemen (Houénou, Kouyaté and Lamine Senghor among them) were to play leading roles in the affairs of the Ligue and its successors from 1924 to 1936.

7. G. Wesley Johnson: "The Ascendancy of Blaise Diagne and the Beginning of African Politics in Senegal", op.cit., p. 252.

8. Lamine Guéye: Itinéraire Africain (Présence Africaine, 1966), p. 52.

Concerning the early life of Marc Kojo Tovalou Houénou, there is little information. Usually he is glibly described as the play-boy son of a wealthy Dahomean merchant who spent half his life in the bohemian society of Paris and who later turned into a racist and irresponsible political agitator with left-wing sympathies after being publicly humiliated by white Americans.⁹ Houénou was born in Cotonou in April 1877, the son of a well educated and wealthy Dahomean merchant. Joseph-Tovalou-Padonou Quénou (or Houénou)¹⁰ Tovalou's father died in 1925 at the age of 70; in his lifetime he became a 'chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur', 'officier de l'etoile noire du Bénin', and 'chevalier de l'ordre du Cambodge'. Tovalou's great grandfather Azanmado Quénou (a Roman Catholic) hailed from Zado (Dahomey) and settled in Ouidah in April 1810; in 1827 he was nominated president of the Chamber of Commerce by His Majesty Ghezo of Abomey. He died at Ouidah on 6th August 1866. The real founder

9. See, for example, Roi Ottley: No Green Pastures (London, 1952), pp. 107-108; Ottley wrongly spells his name "Kogo".

10. Interview with Madame Veuve Rose Elisha (née T. Quénou), Cotonou, Oct. 2, 1966. Madame Elisha, who is Houénou's sister, informed the author that Houénou was sent to Paris for his education at an early age (he lived in France and elsewhere in Europe between 1890 and 1925, becoming politically active in 1921-1936), was very clever but was 'stubborn' and was a persistent critic of the French colonial administration. Nearly all the surviving members of the Houénou family living in Cotonou and Ouidah whom the author interviewed, spoke of Tovalou's 'stubbornness' and fondness of politics. One of his critics, M. Alidji (local historian of Ouidah and formerly chef de canton) flatly refused to talk about him but merely called him a 'rascal'. This reluctance to talk about Houénou may partly be due to family feuds and partly to the fact that Houénou's agitation against the colonial administration adversely affected the fortunes and the status of the Houénou family. The author was informed by Madame Houénou, however, that Houénou's correspondence, books, etc. which she collected from Dakar, Senegal, after Houénou's death there in 1936, were stolen from her after she returned from the Senegal. I am satisfied that Madame Houénou's account of her brother's early life is, in general, reliable.

of the Houénou family and the architect of its fortune was Azanmado's son Possy Berry Houenou, said to have died at the age of 100. Tovalou's grandfather, Padanou Quénou who died in 1887, was also president of the Dahomey Chamber of Commerce.¹¹ Tovalou Houénou is described by the Negro American journalist, Roi Ottley, as 'tall, smooth and shiny as ebony.... educated in Europe, and was fluent in French, German and English.'¹² He read law at the university of Bordeaux, where he received his 'licence' and set up legal practice in Paris. At the outbreak of the Great War he, like his fellow French Negroes, enlisted with the French Army and fought bravely at Duoamont and Verdun where several Negro soldiers lost their lives.¹³ After the war he still remained popular with high Parisian society which feted and lionized him, but it was not easy for him to forget that he was a member of the family of Behanzin, the King of Dahomey who was deposed and exiled by the French. Moreover, the war had had a tremendous effect on his

11. The information on the history of the Houenou family was gleaned from the inscriptions in the family vault of the Houénous at Ouidah. The author should like to express his thanks to M. Felix Francois Quénou and to M. Etienne F. Quénou, chef de Collectivité, Quartier Bresil, Ouidah, for their assistance in tracing the history of the Quénou family.

12. Roi Ottley, op.cit., p. 107.

13. Garvey's The Negro World, 24/8/1929 states that Houenou trained both as a doctor and a lawyer and that he served in the war as a doctor. See Gustave Gautherot: "Le Bolchevisme en Afrique", Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française, 1930, p. 423; also Houenou's speech: "Le Probleme de la Race Noire" on February 20, 1924 at a conference held at the l'Ecole Interalliée des Hautes Etudes Sociales: "Ma sympathie, mon affection, mon amour pour la France ne sauraient faire aucun doute, puisqu'aux heures critiques de 1914, sans aucune violence extérieure, spontanément, j'ai assumé le devoir de tout citoyen et j'ai exposé ma vie comme tous les Français....."

attitude to European civilisation and on his views as to the future of the Negro race, especially the French Negro. Up to the time of his espousal of Pan-Negroism in 1924, however, Tovalou 'had the good taste not to mix politics and racialism with smart bohemianism'.¹⁴ His race consciousness was also influenced by the Pan-African movements which gained prominence between 1919 and 1925, for in 1921 he wrote a short book in Paris, which can perhaps be described as a forerunner of the more literary theory of negritude of the 30s. The book bore the harmless title of L'Involution des Métamorphoses et des Métempsychoses de l'Univers.¹⁵ The book is a combination of linguistics, theology and philosophy, and was intended to demonstrate the unity of language and of cultures; by implication, it was an attack on Eurocentricism and a questioning of the right of Europeans to dominate other races on the assumption of cultural superiority. It was also a plea for racial equality. Like his distinguished successor, Léopold Senghor, Tovalou in a less artistic manner, argued that each people and culture was part of a whole and had its own distinctive contribution to that universal civilisation. A few examples will suffice:

Comme les fleuves ont leur source commune dans le sein de la terre et mêlent leurs ondes dans l'océan et l'air qui les évaporent, de même les langues, distinctes en apparence, se mêlent et se fondent dans la loi phonétique.

14. Roi Ottley, op.cit., pp. 107-108.

15. I am grateful to a relative of Houénou, M. Clétus Quénum who is principal of a school in Cotonou, for allowing me access to this book and to other newspaper material relating to Tovalou. Dr. Emil Zinsou, currently Foreign Minister of the Republic of Dahomey, stated at a recent symposium on Pan-Africanism that Houénou 'as an authentic African forerunner of the movement, claimed his negritude even before that word was coined', Pan-Africanism Reconsidered (ed. American Society of African Culture, University of California Press, 1962), p. 74.

Houenou quoted Renan's 'Origins du christianisme' with approval: "L'âge des origines c'est le chaos, mais un chaos riche de vie; c'est la glaire féconde où un être se prépare à exister, monstre encore, mais doué d'un principe d'unité, d'un type assez fort pour écarter les impossibilités, pour se donner les organes essentiels."¹⁶ He continued, explaining his purpose in writing the book:

Mon dessin, dans cet ouvrage est de ramener les individualités irréductibles du système évolutif de l'univers à l'homogénéité, à l'identité primitives....¹⁷

The war, as we have said, had opened his eyes; towards the end of the same book he observed of Europe: "... en venant en Europe, j'ai compris que la civilisation est une immense bouffonnerie qui s'achève dans la boue et le sang, comme en 1914...."

Like most 'clerks' who desire to enter the lists on the side of 'the people', Tovalou not only saw a connection between the thought he was expounding and action he anticipated, but also saw himself as a messianic role:

Le sage est l'homme qui a la sagesse d'avouer tout de suite qu'il ne vaut pas mieux que ses frères. La valeur de l'homme fait la valeur du principe.... Mon oeuvre sera éternelle comme la pensée qui l'a conçue.¹⁸

And in an outburst of nationalist fervour he asserted:

L'Afrique n'a pas encore apporté sa contribution à la vie de la cité, à la civilisation, son tour viendra. Méfiez-vous de ces hommes de bronze, leur force et leur lumière étonneront vos pays de brumes; le soleil est de chez eux La tradition est la conscience de ceux qui n'en ont pas, ils

16. K. Tovalou Houenou: L'Involution des Métamorphoses et des Métempsychoses de l'Univers (Paris, March 13, 1921), p. 5.

17. Ibid., p. 6.

18. Ibid., p. 77.

sont la majorité; gardons-la religieusement.... Un guide étranger disparaît et meurt: ¹⁹ la conscience ne meurt pas, elle peut même nous survivre.

Between 1921 and 1923, Tovalou seems to have become more actively engaged in political activity and appears to have been associated with the French Communist Party. He was certainly in touch with Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. between 1921 and 1923, for we are told that copies of The Negro World reached educated circles in Dahomey through one of Quenum's sons at Paris.²⁰ At the same time in Paris, radical anti-colonial newspapers, sometimes communist in sympathy, made their appearance and usually filtered through the docks to French West Africa. These left-wing newspapers and The Negro World (which had already been banned in the British African colonies as 'seditious and demoralising literature') almost created a revolutionary scare among French officials in West Africa. In the official correspondence for 1923-25, one of these newspapers is referred to, and control of its circulation in West Africa, particularly Dahomey (which had witnessed a series of disturbances in 1923), recommended. "Le Paria", a French Communist publication, was one of the newspapers classified by the French colonial

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19. Ibid., pp. 71-72. In Cotonou I interviewed four contemporaries of Tovalou, three of whom could still recite this passage verbatim.
20. John Ballard: "The Porto Novo Incidents of 1923: Politics in the Colonial Era", Odu, vol. 2, No.1, 1966, p.66. This was not the first time that French Negroes had taken interest in Negro American race leaders and movements; some of them, resident in Paris, had had contacts with the Tuskegeeian Booker T. Washington: see Harlan: "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden". The American Historical Review, vol. LXXI, no.2, 1966, p. 464; extracts from The Negro World were also published in French, and Tovalou is described in The Negro World, 17/8/1929 as "U.N.I.A. Representative in France".

authorities as "journaux à tendance subversive publiés tant à l'étranger qu'en France" and which had found its way into Porto Novo. As for the circulation of the other Paris produced papers, Governor Fourn was of the opinion that "Il n'en est pas moins vrai que leur circulation et diffusion dans les milieux indigènes représentent un danger dont le Gouvernement local a le devoir de se préoccuper."²¹ Among the anti-colonial newspapers produced in Paris, M. Fourn thought "l'un des plus dangereux est "Le Paria" organe du Parti communiste", a paper which had found its way into the hands of influential Dahomeans in Cotonou like J.J. Garcia a Cotonou merchant, and local teachers like M. Émile Zinsou Bode of Ouidah, and François Quenum of Dasso; it had even found its way into Lomé. It was also believed that recipients of this journal were "véritables agents de propagande communiste".²² Then, after the Porto Novo disturbances, which the administration believed were influenced by revolutionary propaganda from Paris,²³ Fourn in a

21. *Départ Confidentiel*, 3 janvier 1921 au 20 avril 1925; 182 C, 29 Juin 1923, l'administrateur commandant cercle de Cotonou. Archives Nationales du Dahomey, Porto Novo. "Le Paria" was in fact published in Paris between April 1922 and April 1926 by Hô Chi Minh who also founded the Pro-Communist Union inter-coloniale whose official organ was "Le Paria". Both Hô's "Le Paria" and his violent pamphlet Le Procès de la colonisation française condemned French rule in general, including colonial abuses in Dahomey, Madagascar and the French West Indies. Hô Chi Minh is also said to have written articles for La race noire during his stay in Russia in 1924. See Jean Lacouture: Hô Chi Minh (Editions du Seuil, 1967), p.22, pp.29-36.

22. Ibid.

23. See John Ballard: "The Porto Novo Incidents of 1923: Politics in the Colonial Era". *Odu*, vol. 2, No.1, 1966: P. Garigue: An Anthropological Interpretation of the Changing Political Leadership in West Africa. University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1954, pp. 343-345. Le Journal, a Paris newspaper, stated on March 1923 that the cause of the disturbances was the intrigues
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despatch to the chief administrator (cercle Allada), advised him to keep an eye on two other suspected communist agents - A. Tolo and Almeida L. Vincent of Abomey-Calavi, adding: "Vous n'ignorez pas toutes les difficultés qu'ont cherché à nous susciter ces milieux dits intellectuels au moment des événements de 1923; vous ne pouvez donc pas et ne devez pas vous désintéresser."²⁴ Yet another despatch observed that "Le Paria" contained "véritables appels à la révolte adressés à tous les indigènes de nos Colonies".²⁵ In July 1924, Kojo Tovalou Houenou's Les Continents, organ of his newly founded Pan-Negro Ligue Universelle pour la défense de la Race Noire, and another radical and anti colonial paper, L'Action Coloniale, made their appearance in West Africa and were widely circulated around Ouidah and Porto Novo; these two journals were also described as subversive.²⁶

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23. Contd.] between rival chiefs, but Kojo Tovalou Houenou, no doubt closely following developments in Porto Novo from Paris, told a reporter of this newspaper that on the contrary, all the disturbances had been caused by increase in taxation - *ibid.* R. Buell in *The Native Problem in Africa* (vol. I, p. 1019 and vol. II, p. 16) adds recruitment in the French army and resentment against the discrimination in status between citizens and subjects to the causes of the incidents of 1923. It must be remembered, however, that bad economic conditions in the 1920s and the virtual stopping of the palm oil trade must have greatly contributed to the political unrest - see Garigue, pp. 344-345, 349, 366; also Les Continents, Sept. 1, 1924: "Quelques Revendications Dahoméens".
24. "Depart Confidentiel, 3 janvier 1921 au 20 avril 1925; 141 C, 4 Avril 1924, M. l'administrateur en chef, commandant cercle Allada". Archives Nationales du Dahomey, Porto Novo.
25. *Ibid.*, 142 C, 4 Avril 1924.
26. *Ibid.*, 304 C, 1/7/1927, M. le Gouverneur General a Dakar.

In the same year (1924) in Paris, Houénou (whom the anti-Communist writer M. Gustav Gautherot believes was for some time after the war aligned with the Comintern and with Marcus Garvey)²⁷ founded the Ligue Universelle de la Défense de la Race Noire and a monthly journal with the Pan-Negro title of Les Continents, after he had suffered humiliation and racial discrimination at the hands of white Americans at a Montmartre café: 'Ayant été expulsé d'un cabaret de Montmartre par des fêtards américains que choquait le contact de ce nègre en habit, Kodjo-Tovalou, furieux d'un affront d'ailleurs odieux, écouta les suggestions des agents communistes et se fit le champion de sa race contre le "capitalisme européen". Il crea le journal Les Continents, qui inséra les diatribes moscovitaire, puis la Ligue Universelle pour la Défense de la Race Noire'²⁸ Houenou, however, was already an anti-colonialist before 1924; it only required the shock of American racism to turn him into a Pan-Africanist. Such humiliation was too much for a sophisticated Frenchman and a 'prince' of Dahomey.

27. Gustav Gautherot: Le Bolchévisme Aux Colonies et l'imperialisme Rouge (Librairie de la Revue Franciase, Paris, 1930), p. 272. "Le Bolchevisme en Afrique", Bulletin Du Comité de L'Afrique Française 1930, p. 423. It is unlikely that Houenou had any direct liaison with the Comintern, although his anti-colonial agitation was supported by the French Party; he was, however, a supporter of Marcus Garvey and visited the United States in 1924 as guest of the U.N.I.A.; his sister, Madame Veuve Elisha, informed the writer that Houenou was a 'friend of Marcus Garvey' and that Garvey's activities were well known in Cotonou and Porto Novo in the 1920s. Houenou married Roberta Dodds, a Negro American in 1925. In 1927, however, he was involved in a scandal in Chicago with a Mrs. Zulme Knowlton, French born wife of a white American: see The Negro World, 4/6/1927, p.2.

28. G. Gautherot: "Le Bolchévisme en Afrique", Bulletin du Comité de L'Afrique Française, 1930, pp. 423-424.

Houénou became President of the Ligue as well as proprietor of Les Continents: the chief editor was Jean Fangeat. Associated with the editorial staff was Prince Ouanillo Behanzin of Dahomey and the celebrated French Negro West Indian novelist Rene Maran (vice-President), whose book Batouala, which was a bitter indictment of Europe's senseless 'mission civilisatrice' in Africa, won the French Academy's Goncourt Prize in 1921.²⁹ Maran contributed several articles, notably on Negro literature and culture. Among his most interesting articles is an open letter to the Negro American Professor Alain Locke, author of The New Negro and one of the leading spirits in the Negro renaissance in the 1930s, criticising an article Locke wrote in the Negro journal Opportunity for his uncritical admiration of France: Locke, he said, had failed to distinguish between "official" or imperialist France and the France of culture and humanity.³⁰ Houénou wrote the editorials as well as several articles on colonial oppression. Events in both British and French colonies were reported, as well as extracts on Haitian history, politics in Madagascar and Ghandiism. In particular, there was a wide coverage of Negro American affairs, especially Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. by J.J. Adam, described as the paper's U.N.I.A. delegate; in fact, several issues of Les Continents carried reprints of Garvey's speeches and accounts of U.N.I.A. meetings in America.³¹ Some poems of Langston Hughes and Countee

29. For the influence and significance of Maran's Batouala see Lilyan Kesteloot, op.cit., pp. 83-87 and Hommage a Rene Maran (Présence Africaine, 1965), especially Leopold Senghor's tribute "René Maran, Précurseur de la Négritude", pp.9-13.

30. Les Continents, Première Année, no.13, 15 juin, 1924.

31. For example, ibid., no.4, 1er. Juillet, 1924: "Un Appel de M. Marcus Garvey".

Cullen were reprinted occasionally and a regular column under the title "La Race Noire d'Amerique" summarized news from Negro newspapers.

Article II of the constitution of the Ligue pledged: "Développer les liens de solidarite et d'universelle fraternité entre tous les membres de la race noire; les grouper pour la reconstitution de leur terre d'origine: l'Afrique, le plus vieux de tous les continents; les défendre contre toutes violences ou exactions; les protéger dans leur biens et leur personne; combattre les calomnies intéressées des exploiters qui propagent l'idée de l'infériorité des Races, afin de justifier leur asservissement et d'éterniser leur tutelle: obtenir qu'ils soient traités sur toute la surface du globe comme des hommes libres jouissant des droits imprescriptibles du citoyen: venir au secours des nécessiteux, des pauvres, des malades; apporter les bienfaits de l'instruction et de l'éducation jusqu'aux poulades de plus reculées du Centre Africain; concourir au développement et à l'évolution de la Race en créant des établissements de sciences et d'art, des écoles primaires, secondaires, industrielles et d'agriculture - obligatoires, des collèges, des académies, des universités des foyers, des salles de réunion, des bibliothèques publiques, des revues et des journaux; veiller au maintien de l'intégrité territoriale et de l'indépendance des Etats africains ou gouvernés par des Africains, qui jouissent actuellement de leur autonomie: Abyssinie, Liberia, Haiti, Saint Domingue, etc..... et s'opposer, par tous les moyens materiels et moraux, à cette nouvelle forme de la traite: la cession, ou la vente d'un pays ou d'un colonie à une nation étrangère."

It is interesting to note, however, that the Ligue like most radical Negro groups in Paris, was anti-Blaise Diagne whom it persistently and violently reviled as a 'traitor' to the Negro race and as a reactionary. Apart from voicing the grievances of ex-servicemen and condemning the abuses of French colonial rule, the Ligue also campaigned for the naturalisation of French subjects and the abolition of the Indigénat, whereas Diagne came to the defence of forced labour in the colonies, supported a conservative colonial policy in general, and vaguely envisaged the eventual independence of French African colonies.³² Houenou, on the other hand, argued that the duties rendered by French Negroes entitled them to the rights enjoyed by Frenchmen, and that any modification of these rights amounted to a system of tutelage:

Nous avons versé notre sang pour la patrie française: aujourd'hui, dans la paix, volontairement ou involontairement, nous continuons à remplir le devoir suprême du citoyen: le service militaire. Pourquoi ne jouirions-nous pas de ses droits? Nous voulons être citoyens d'un pays quelconque, voilà pourquoi si la France nous rejette, nous exigeons l'autonomie: si elle nous accueille, l'assimilation totale et intégrale. Assez de mensonges et d'hypocrisie, l'association dans les conditions actuelles n'est qu'un esclavage à peine déguisé.³³

On August 16, 1924, Houenou was in New York, and on the 19th was presented to the Congress of Garvey's U.N.I.A. by Garvey himself and by T. Stephens, described as 'directeur de la Section française du "Negro World".' Les Continents described the U.N.I.A. meeting at Liberty Hall where Houenou spoke to a crowd of about 5,000, as "cette

32. Ch. Gros, op.cit., "Le Testament Politique de Blaise Diagne", p. 137; but see Ch. VI, pp. 25-29.

33. Les Continents, Première Année, no. 4, 1er. Juillet, 1924: "L'Esclavagisme Colonial: Nous ne sommes pas des enfants...." by Prince Kojo Tovalou-Houenou.

imposante manifestation".³⁴ At the U.N.I.A. meeting, however, Tovalou was not as anti-French as was expected. On French attitudes to the Negro he said on August 20th at Liberty Hall in New York:

La France métropolitaine ne veut pas tolérer et ne tolérera jamais les préjugés de couleur. Elle considère ses enfants noirs et jaunes à l'égal de ses enfants blancs."

He added, with a Garveyite touch: "Nous voulons avoir notre place au soleil, nous voulons travailler pour la rédemption de l'Afrique."³⁵ His speech was preceeded by the usual Garveyite pomp and display of all the symbols of the new Ethiopianism, after which "the prince of Dahomey" was lionized by the Garveyites. Harlem, of course, was visited, as well as Buffalo. Houénou then went on to Philadelphia where he was welcomed by the local branch of the U.N.I.A. and by the mayor. He also addressed meetings in Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland.³⁶ At the Harlem U.N.I.A. meeting, Houénou touched on Negro problems in America, and accused white America of deliberately encouraging its Negroes to despise their African origin. The U.N.I.A., he said, was "le Sionisme de la Race Noire. Elle à l'avantage dans son radicalisme de préciser nettement le problème, de tracer la route large et lamineuse qui doit nous conduire au salut."³⁷

34. Ibid., no.8, 1er. Septembre, 1924: "Notre Directeur en Amerique".

35. Ibid., no.9, 15 Septembre, 1924: "Notre Directeur en Amerique: Du Liberty Hall au Carnegie Hall et à Philadelphie".

36. Ibid., no.15, 15 Decembre, 1924.

37. Ibid., no.10, 1er. Octobre, 1924.

It is significant that although Houénou approved of Garvey's radicalism and equated it with true Panafricanism, he was careful to distinguish between Pan African radicalism and utopianism:

Je connais la vanité des formules oratoires et des écrits les mieux pensés et médités L'Afrique, le plus vieux de tous les continents, peut bien disposer d'elle-même plus légitimement que ces fantômes de nations créées par les hallucinations wilsonniennes.

Diversity, not a monolithic pan-Negro movement with the same programme and method for all Negro groups, was his preference:

La race noire présente des groupements importants dans le monde entier; il faut leur permettre de contribuer à l'oeuvre de rédemption selon leur méthodes, leur disciplines, leurs activités. Dans ce but de diversité dans l'action, nous avons fondé à Paris, la Ligue Universelle pour la Défense de la Race Noire

Paris had been chosen as the seat of the new Pan-Negro movement, he said, because from many considerations, it was "la coeur de la Race Noir".³⁸

Back in Paris, the hostility of the Ligue to Diagne soon developed into a head-on collision sparked off by an article in Les Continents on October 15th 1924 entitled "Le Bon Apôtre" ('The Good Apostle') which described Diagne as an agent of French colonialism and accused him of receiving a commission for the Negro troops he had recruited during the war. Diagne, an astute politician and a man of explosive wrath, interpreted this attack as an attempt to discredit him in Africa, and sued Jean Fangeat, the editor-in-chief and René Maran for libel in the Cour d'Assises, the second highest tribunal in France. The Ligue and other radical race groups in

38. Ibid.

Paris rightly saw Diagne's action not only as a civil proceeding but as a political litigation to discredit parties supporting the anti colonial and anti Diagne politics of the Ligue; they also seized the opportunity to crystallise all their grievances and make Diagne appear to all Frenchmen as the symbol of everything radical Negro intellectuals disliked. Points of difference between Diagne and his critics - colonial policy, recruitment of black troops, communism and nationalism - inevitably came to be bound up with the case. According to Fangeat, M. Diagne had accused the Ligue and its supporters of bolshevist tendencies and of anti patriotism (i.e. critical of French colonial policy).³⁹ It was during this trial that Lamine Senghor (not to be confused with Leopold Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal) made his first appearance in the politics of Negro groups in Paris. Before 1924 he had joined the French Communist Party on his return from Senegal in 1923 and was increasingly becoming critical of the French administration (which had refused to allow him to settle in Senegal because they feared he might spread communist doctrines there), and, in spite of his attachment to France, was also becoming a racialist. At the trial, he volunteered as a witness and revealed some of the irregular methods of recruitment of black troops during the war, and complained of the low wages they were paid; Senghor ended his accusation by warning Diagne "ne pas condamner un blanc, qui nous défend, nous les nègres". Diagne, however, had his revenge,

39. Ibid., nos. 13-14, 15 Nov. - 1er. Dec. 1924; also West Africa, 20/12/1924, p. 1441: "M. Diagne's Action for Defamation".

and at the end of the trial, Fangeat was given a suspended sentence of six months imprisonment, plus a fine of 2,000 francs.

Diagne's encounter with the Ligue was widely interpreted as a logical outcome of the clash between two schools of thought on French colonial policy - the progressive critics led by René Maran and Tovalou Houénou and the reactionary group of which Diagne was an influential member. As one editorial explained: "It was the point of explosion where the two opposing tendencies met; in short, between Maranism and Dianism". The same editorial continued:

By all who know him, Mr. Diagne is admitted to be a brilliant parliamentarian, a subtle politician and a truly clever man But they differ with vehemence as to the wisdom of his racial outlook and disagree on the amount of interest he displays in the welfare of his own people.⁴⁰

Why, it was asked, did Diagne see fit to turn his anger on the struggling newspaper of a Pan-Negro group and batter it with the heavy artillery of the State Criminal Department, rather than reply to European newspapers which had steadily ridiculed and criticized him? It was certain that the Garveyism of the Ligue was relatively harmless, and that the Ligue, as an organisation, could not effectively function in the colonies where its activities would be banned; but it was clear, however, that dissident intellectuals like Houénou, Maran, Kouyaté and Senghor could effectively erode Diagne's standing in metropolitan politics. In 1926, however, Houénou's Ligue was driven underground, partly as a result of Diagne's opposition to it, and partly because the riots and strikes in Dahomey between 1923 and 1926 (which the administration attributed to outside revolutionary

40. Ibid., "M. Diagne prosecutes 'Les Continents': Maranism Versus Diagnism".

propaganda and to a few Dahomean agitators) led to stricter surveillance of nationalistic groups. Added to this was Houénou's rash attempt in 1925 to 'liberate' Dahomey with some Negroes. According to Roi Ottley, Houénou 'made a long visit to Harlem, where he was feted and somehow became involved with fiercely race-conscious Negroes, who urged him to strike a blow for his black countrymen. He returned to Paris with notions of liberating Dahomey. His racial awakening unfortunately dovetailed with country-wide strikes among the natives of French West Africa, which caused hardships to coupon-clipping Parisians. Before long he was publicly humiliated. Paris newspapers attacked his personal affairs He was "exposed" as a bogus prince He became persona non grata, and was quickly driven into obscurity. The Negro had committed the unpardonable sin of talking about freedom for colonial blacks in Parisian circles dependent upon income from Africa'.⁴¹ Houénou was in fact arrested in Togo by order of the Parquet of Cotonou; in Paris his case was taken up by the Ligue and by Henry Torrès and Jacques Doriot, representing the "Commission coloniale" of the Communist Party.⁴² Houénou himself turned his attention to Senegalese politics, supporting Diouf against Diagne in the elections of 1928 and 1932. He died in Dakar in 1936 as a result, it is believed, of injuries sustained when opponents attacked a meeting he was addressing during the 1936 election of the

41. Roi Ottley, op.cit., p.108; also Gustav Gautherot: "Le Bolchévisme en Afrique" - Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française, 1930, p. 424.

42. Ibid.

communes.⁴³

Houénou's Ligue Universelle de Défense de la Race Noire was succeeded in 1926 by a more radical group, among whom we first encounter the phrase 'Negro personality'. The successor to Houénou's Ligue, the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre (hereafter referred to as the C.D.R.N.) was led by the Senegalese Lamine Senghor, who after his discharge from the French army in 1919 studied at the Sorbonne, and joined the Communist Party in 1924. The Comité declared its radicalism from the outset:

.... nous introduirons une formale nouvelle de réalisme et de sincérité dans la politique dite coloniale, un élément vigoureux et positif dans la question nègre: l'affirmation de la personnalité nègre. L'intérêt de chacun sera sauvegardé dans la défense de l'intérêt général.⁴⁴

In March 1926 the Comité was founded by a small group (about a dozen) of politically inexperienced but sensitive young Negroes all opposed to Diagne and the colonial policy he supported. On July 4th, at another meeting held at the l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales, the title of Houénou's Ligue was formally changed into the C.N.R.N. with Lenin as honorary president, and a telegram sent to the Executive Committee of the Comintern:

Portons à votre connaissance élection de Lénine, présidence honoraire perpétuelle Comité.

Saluons fraternellement ouverture séance, examen situation mondiale. Attirons généreuse attention sur monde nègre travailleur.

Faisons vœux travail commun pour réaliser sincère fraternité universelle.

Pour le Comité de la Race Nègre: le secrétaire général,
J. Gothou Luniou.⁴⁵

43. Information supplied by Madame Rose Elisha, Cotonou, 5/10/1966.

44. La Race Nègre, no.1, Juin 1927: "La Nécessité de Nous Organiser".

45. Text of telegram quoted in G. Gautherot, op.cit., p. 424.

The monthly organ of the C.D.R.N. was La Voix des Nègres, subsequently changed, in late 1927 to La Race Nègre. By the end of 1926 the C.D.R.N. numbered over 300 members. In Senghor's eyes, however, the enemies of the C.D.R.N. were still the Government, especially the Negro deputies; he even spoke of "la complicité des parlementaires nègres qui ne voient en notre mouvement que la fin de leur règne" and who saw the C.D.R.N. as a communist and anarchist organization. These Negroes, he alleged, had allowed themselves to play an "ignoble" and "criminal" role against the C.D.R.N. which genuinely represented the interests and views of French Negroes. Senghor also asserted, for the benefit of both black and white critics, that the C.D.R.N. was not a minstrel show managed by some humanitarian white politician, but a universal race movement for the protection of the rights, interests, and prestige of the Negro race:

A ceux qui ne voulaient pas que notre mouvement de défense de la race nègre fût universel; à ceux qui voudraient faire de nous un groupe de danseurs de "charleston" et d'autres danses exotiques, sous la présidence et l'oeil bienveillant d'un politicien blanc quelconque, à tous ceux-là.... Frères nègres du monde entier (et principalement vous, nègres africains, qui avez beaucoup à vous plaindre)! Rappelez-vous que le devoir suprême d'un nègre est d'aider et soutenir matériellement et moralement la Ligue.... Aider et soutenir cette organisation, c'est contribuer à la défense des droits; des intérêts et du prestige même de la race....⁴⁶

Lamine Senghor, the president of the C.N.R.N., was born in 1889 in Kaolack, Senegal, and was of the Sérère tribe. At the outbreak of the war he was recruited into the army and saw service in France in 1915-1919. Contemporary accounts state that Senghor was noted

46. La Race Nègre, no.1, Juin 1927.

for his courage and loyalty, that he refused to participate in a mutiny of Senegalese infantrymen at Fréjus, and that he was awarded the "croix de guerre". The use of gas during the war severely affected his health. He was discharged from the army in 1919 with the rank of sergeant, and returned to the Senegal;⁴⁷ in 1922 he returned to Paris and attended classes at the Sorbonne, taking some interest in metropolitan politics. He joined the French Communist Party in 1923 after failing to convince the Government that his deteriorating health demanded his return to Senegal. The Government, however, feared that he might spread Communist and anti-colonial propaganda if he was allowed to return: Senghor had already become a nationalist:

A cette époque, il s'occupait fort peu de politique, avouait avec naïveté son ignorance là-dessus. Mais l'irritant question de sa race lui tenait au coeur, ce qui le décida à militer au sien de l'Union Intercoloniale, puis du Parti Communiste. Toutefois, le regrettable procès Diagne - Les Continents, en 1924, joua un rôle péremptoire dans sa vie politique jusque-là timide. Dès alors, on le vit déployer une énergie fiévreuse partout où il pouvait être utile à sa race.⁴⁸

In 1924 he stood as Communist Party candidate in the Paris (thirteenth arrondissement) cantonal elections, obtaining 965 votes; he lost the election, although he had a good run. A few weeks later an unsuccessful attempt was made on his life by a fellow Negro.⁴⁹ Senghor then joined Houénou's Pan-Negro Ligue in 1924-1926, and together with radicals like Kouyaté and Dr. Sajous opposed Diagne's policies. After the arrest of Houenou in 1925 he continued

47. Ibid., no.5, Mai 1928, obituary.

48. Ibid.

49, Ibid.

the Ligue, renaming it the C.D.R.N., the core of whose leadership had left wing sympathies. The office of the C.D.R.N. was at 43, rue du Simplon in Paris; its treasurer was Stephane Rosso, a West Indian, and its secretary general, Gothon Luniou. Another official of the C.D.R.N. was the Soudanese Tiémoho Garan-Kouyaté, a Communist, who was then a student of literature at the university of Paris, but was active in political circles like the Club International des Marins (through which revolutionary literature reached Negro sailors) and the Marseilles section of the Association des Indochinois; Kouyaté was also section leader of the L.D.R.N. at Var and des Bouches-du-Rhône in 1928. In 1929 he became president of the L.D.R.N.

No sooner was the Comité established than Senghor, who had Leninist ideas about organisation, clashed with the secretary-General Gothon Luniou; there seems to have been some disagreement on the political orientation of the C.D.R.N. between Gothon Luniou (who was supported by other officials - Satino, Mouthia, Capitaine and William) and the majority of the Bureau of the C.D.R.N. Senghor held that in all matters of policy, the secretary general had to accept and carry out the decision of the majority of the Bureau; Gothon Luniou was accused of repeatedly refusing to call meetings of the Bureau at the request of the president, of dispatching correspondence on behalf of the C.D.R.N. without reference to the policy forming Bureau, and of confusing his functions with those of the treasurer. It transpired, however, that the real reason for the dispute lay in the ideological differences between Senghor and Gothon Luniou:

... la décision prise à son sujet par la majorité du Bureau trouve son origine dans l'opposition politique qui existe entre ses idées et celles de Senghor Lamine.⁵⁰

As the dispute ended in a stalemate (the voting on the issue was confused), the Bureau of the Comité was replaced by a provisional one of three members - Amadou Diaze (a Senegalese), Satino and Bloncourt (West Indians). Senghor, who still remained president, explained in an article that the former secretary general had misinterpreted the aims and political sympathies of the C.D.R.N. to a French public which had been led to think that the C.D.R.N. was a non political club; he also confirmed that the policy of the C.D.R.N. was "Collaboration permanente avec les organisations qui luttent véritablement pour la libération des peuples opprimés et pour la révolution mondiale...."⁵¹

In 1926 Senghor's tuberculosis worsened and he had to move away from Paris to Roquebrune-sur-Argens (Var.), though he regularly returned to Paris to report on his activities. In February 1927, he accepted, on behalf of the C.D.R.N., an invitation from Willi Muenzenberg's League Against Imperialism and for National Independence⁵² to attend its inaugural anti-imperialist conference in Brussels. He was accompanied to that conference by Narcisse Danae

50. La Voix Des Nègres, Première Année, Mars, 1927: "Au Comité de Défense de la Race nègre: Assemblée Générale Extraordinaire du dimanche, 16 janvier 1927".

51. Ibid., no.1, janvier 1927: "Ce qu'est notre Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre" by Lamine Senghor. Senghor was, of course, referring to the Comintern and metropolitan Communist parties as well as radical trade unions.

52. See Appendix III.

and Max Bloncourt (Antilles)⁵³ also members of the C.D.R.N. The first meeting of the conference was presided over by Edo Fimmen, secretary general of the International Transport Workers Union. Apart from Lamine Senghor and Max Bloncourt, there were delegates from Africa and the West Indies: Hadjali Abd el Kader (North African Star), Chadli Ben Mustapha and A.H. Mattar; I.A. La Guma (South Africa); Josiah Tshangana Gumede (South African National Congress);⁵⁴ Ibrahim Yousseff (Egypt); Elie Bloncourt (Antilles) and Camille Saint Jacques (Inter-Colonial Union, Negro Peoples Section). Syria, Korea, Cuba, Indonesia, India, U.S.A. (R.B. Moore representing U.N.I.A.);⁵⁵ Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Haiti, Peru

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53. Max Bloncourt, a West Indian Negro, practised law in Paris and defended the Dahomean nationalist Louis Hunkarin in the 1920s: see John Ballard's article on the Porto Novo Incidents of 1923 in Odu, vol. 2, no.1, July 1965, pp. 66, 68. Bloncourt and Senghor were associated with left wing circles in Paris; both Narcisse Danae and Max Bloncourt were leading members of the Union Intercoloniale (Section des vieilles Colonies et Peuples noirs).
54. La Guma had been the leader of Sydney Bunting's League of African Rights in South Africa; according to Padmore (p.351), he and Gumede visited Moscow where they were feted after the Brussels Conference of the League Against Imperialism. Curiously enough, Harry Thuku who had led a riot against the British administration in Kenya in 1922, is included among the delegates to the Brussels Conference: see Gustav Gautherot: Le Bolchévisme Aux Colonies et l'imperialisme Rouge (Librairie de la Revue Francaise, Paris, 1930), pp. 85-86.
55. R.B. Moore was denounced by Garvey's U.N.I.A. in 1927 as a 'communist' and 'imposter' for speaking on behalf of the U.N.I.A. "... the Association sent no delegate to the Brussels conference, and Mr. Richard Moore, the New York representative of the American Negro Congress, an organisation preaching the doctrine of Lenin and Trotsky, was never empowered to appear as its representative There is a great gulf fixed between communism and Garveyism". The Negro World, 19/2/1927, p.2. For Moore's recollections of the Brussels Conference see his contribution entitled "Africa Conscious Harlem" in John Hendrik Clarke ed. Harlem, U.S.A. (Seven Seas Books, 1964), p. 68.

and Indo China were also represented. At the conference, Senghor came into prominence by his violent and nationalistic diatribes against French colonialism;⁵⁶ it was at that conference also that he made the prophetic remark: 'The Negroes have slept too long. But beware, Europe! Those who have slept long will not go back to sleep when they wake up. Today, the blacks are waking up!'⁵⁷ Before the close of the Conference, he was elected a member of the executive committee of the League and of the Bureau of the League.⁵⁸ He returned to Paris, but his anti-colonial attacks had made him a marked man; in March 1927 he was arrested at Cannes and imprisoned at Draguignan prison on an obscure charge. Partly because of his bad health and partly because of representations to Mr. Pioncaré, president of the Conseil, by the League, deputies of the Chambre des Communes, of the Reichstag and of the Belgian parliament, Senghor was released in late 1927, although a strict watch was still kept on his activities; but he remained an

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56. Mr. Bridgeman who attended that conference, tells me he remembers Senghor's speech for its indignation. For Senghor's speech and that of Bloncourt at the Brussels Conference see La Voix Des Nègres, Première Année, no.1, Mars. 1927: "Au Congrès de Bruxelles du 10 au 15 Février 1927: Condamnation de l'Imperialisme et de la Colonisation"; also the official record of the conference in the League's publication Das Flammenzeichen Vom Palais Egmont: Offizielles Protokoll Des Kongresses Gegen Koloniale Unterdrückung Und Imperialismus, Brüssel, 10. - 15. Februar 1927. Herausgegeben von der Liga gegen Imperialismus und für nationale Unabhängigkeit. (Neuer Deutscher Verlag, Berlin, 1927), pp. 113-119.
57. Lamine Senghor, quoted in Padmore, op.cit., p. 324. Senghor had also written an anti-colonial pamphlet called La Violation d'un Pays, in which he envisaged a colonial revolution aided by the working classes of the capitalist Colonial Powers.
58. For a list of the committee members of the League Against Imperialism and of the League's various organs, see Gautherot, op.cit., Ch.V, esp. p. 84.

unrepentant Communist and Pan-Negroist:

Il a échappé aux officiels que Senghor était sincèrement africain, d'un nationalisme farouche, haineux même. Il apportait l'entêtement mystique de Polyeucte au travail pour l'émancipation de sa race.⁵⁹

In July 1927 he had another serious attack and was confined to his bed for several months, during which time his father and then his son Diène (August 22nd 1927) died. His tuberculosis was followed by paralysis and loss of speech. He died at Fréjus at 11 p.m. on November 25 1927 - "un bon nègre, un sincere africain soldat de sa race."⁶⁰

La Race Nègre reflected the opinions of nearly all political groups in Paris - from the Indo-China nationalists to the Etoile Nord Africaine; even the proceedings of the West African Student Union based in London were sometimes reported.⁶¹ The C.D.R.N. was also anti-Diagne, and apart from criticising his views on colonial policy, it also gave its anti-Diagne campaign a nationalistic slant. For example, a call by the Ligue to all Senegalese in France who qualified to vote in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies urged them not to vote for any deputy who did not have the interests of Senegal at heart; Diagne, the C.D.R.N. charged, "se considere comme un francais blanc et non comme un colonise."⁶²

Like its predecessor Les Continents, Senghor's paper commented extensively on Negro American organisations, particularly the Garvey

59. Obituary, La Race Nègre, Première Année, no. 5, Mai 1928.

60. Ibid.

61. See, for example, the summary of J.B. Danquah's presidential address to W.A.S.U., La Race Nègre, Première Année, no. 4, Nov.-Dec. 1927.

62. Ibid.

movement. There were reprints of Garvey's poem "Africa for the Africans" taken from his The Tragedy of White Injustice; colonialism was condemned as the negation of the principle of self-determination; the equality of all races was asserted, and there were sympathetic accounts of Garvey's activities after his imprisonment in 1925.⁶³ The activities of the N.A.A.C.P., The Equal Rights League of Boston and the John Brown Memorial Association of Philadelphia were also reported in La Race Nègre, but in the opinion of the C.D.R.N., Marcus Garvey's U.N.I.A. was "la plus connue en Afrique". The C.D.R.N. also took pride in the growth of banks owned by Negro Americans and in Negro schools and colleges, but it made it clear that while these self-help schemes of the Negro Americans were of the greatest importance to all Negroes and ought to be emulated, the social and political problems of French Negroes were of a different order from those of Negro Americans:

Nous n'avons pas à souffrir en France d'une hostilité aussi accentuée qu'en Amérique, mais ils n'en demeure pas moins que nous devons nous inspirer de cet exemple pour apporter quelque amélioration à notre situation sociale et politique dans la civilisation française. Nous ne pouvons tolérer qu'on puisse user et abuser de nous dans un milieu où nous rencontrons le plus souvent de l'indifférence quand il s'agit de faire droit à nos légitimes aspirations vers le mieux-être. Nos frères d'Amérique nous offrent un exemple vivant de la manière dont nous devons lutter. C'est à leur école que nous apprendrons

63. In Fact, Garvey visited France in July 1928 and met French Negro groups in Paris, and claimed that U.N.I.A. had "already cemented a working plan with the French Negro by which we hope to carry out the great ideals of the U.N.I.A. My visit to France is, indeed, profitable, and I do hope for great results". The Negro World, 4/8/1928, p. 2 and 11/8/1928.

comment nous émanciper en apportant quelque originalité à l'expression de notre personnalité en harmonie avec le milieu catalyseur.⁶⁴

Negro Americans in turn were sympathetic towards the C.D.R.N. and were quick to point out that in spite of the French policy of assimilation and in spite of France's cosmopolitanism, there was a group of French Negro intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the methods of French rule and were agitating for more autonomy within the French empire. One Negro American newspaper, noting the interest which the C.D.R.N. was taking in Negro American affairs commented in 1927:

En commun avec les nègres africains-les plus éclairés, ce groupe s'inspire des nègres américains.... Il est encourageant d'apprendre qu'un élément intellectuel existe parmi les nègres français et que, dans les colonies, la révolte gronde. Le mécontentement est à mi-chemin du progrès.... Les Africains qui se sont éveillés doivent d'eux-mêmes émanciper l'Afrique, mais en triomphant des nombreux obstacles qui nous⁶⁵ environnent, nous pouvons les encourager d'achever cet idéal.

Active members of the C.D.R.N. included Dr. Leo Sajus from Haiti, Sabia Sangaré, Samba Dia, André Beton or Berthon a lawyer at the cour d'Appel in Paris (not to be confused with the Marxist and surrealist poet and philosopher Andre Breton), Adolphe Mathurin, [^]Emile Faure a Senegalese, Jean Toulouse, Garan-Kouyaté (Soudan), Kodo-Kossoul, Jean Bareau (Haiti), as well as a large number of Senegalese, a few Dahomeans and Soudanese, and several West Indians. It was a militant body and was outspoken in its criticism of French

64. Ibid., no.3, Septembre 1927: "Aux Etats-Unis D'Amerique: L'Activite Des Nègres".

65. Extract from The Pittsburg Courier quoted in La Race Nègre, Dauxième Année, no.1, Mars 1929: "Ce Que Les Nègres Des Etats-Unis Pensent De La Race Nègre". See also Garvey's articles in The Negro World, 4/8/1928, p.2 and 11/8/1928.

colonial policy and tended to align itself with the Communists and trade unions. In particular, the trade union section of the C.D.R.N. had as its object the radicalisation of Negro sailors, ex-servicemen and labourers through various clubs, cultural groups and all-Negro restaurants etc. On the political front, it opposed Diagne and vigorously supported his more radical opponents N. Galandou Diouf, Lamine Guéye and Tovalou Houénou; when Diagne defeated Diouf at the election of the communes in Senegal in 1928, the C.D.R.N. roundly condemned the electors for renewing their confidence in a "traitor" and, perhaps with some justification, spoke of "l'élection frauduleuse de M. Diagne". The militancy of the C.D.R.N. and its preoccupation with nationalism and colonialism was something new to the French administration in whose view, anti-colonialism was synonymous with anti-France and therefore with communism. It did not take them long to identify Senghor (who was now bedridden with tuberculosis), Dr. Sajous and Kouyaté as Communist link men. Under Senghor's leadership, the C.D.R.N. went so far as to declare itself, rather naively, in favour of the Comintern and to condemn the European socialist parties and the Second International as betrayers of the liberation movement in the colonies:

La II^e Internationale a trahi la cause des peuples coloniaux ... Les socialistes de Bruxelles ont donné la preuve qu'ils n'entendent toucher à aucune des prérogatives de la bourgeoisie gouvernante. Ils acceptent la colonisation comme un fait acquis L'Internationale Communiste, elle, veut et réclame l'indépendance complète et absolue des peuples coloniaux. Elle rejette la théorie de la supériorité du blanc sur le nègre et travaille pour la fraternité universelle. Elle

soutient tous les mouvements nationaux de libération, et par là pose nettement sur la terrain des réalités la vraie formule wilsonienne du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes. Dans de telles conditions, il n'a pas été difficile aux nègres de juger et de choisir.... les nègres seront unanimes à reconnaître que l'Internationale Communiste⁶⁶ est le seul et véritable défenseur des peuples opprimés.

The editorial then quoted the Theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern to the effect that Negro workers should be aligned to the Red International of Labour Unions and other radical metropolitan unions.

After Senghor's death in late 1927, the C.D.R.N. was reconstituted into the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre (hereafter referred to as the L.D.R.N.) and a more militant leadership with Tiémoho Garan Kouyaté as secretary general and director of the Central Bureau, took over. During Kouyaté's tenure of office (1928-1931) the L.D.R.N. became closely associated with the R.I.L.U. (Profintern), with the French Communist Party (which included self-determination and independence for French colonies in its programme) and with radical unions like the C.G.T.U. (la Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire) - [Communist controlled trade union in affiliation to W.F.T.U.]. As usual, the opposition to Diagne was vociferous; in fact, the L.D.R.N. was opposed to all "les nègres européens" who disagreed with its aims and politics. Diagne was accused of "trahison des intérêts du Sénégal" and of "infidélité à sa patrie"; as for the other Negro deputy from Gaudeloupe, M. Gratien Candace, who styled himself "le fils spirituel de la

66. La Race Negre, Première Année, no. 6, Octobre 1928: "Bruxelles et Moscou". For a more detailed account of the attitudes of both the Socialist International and Comintern towards the colonies and semi-colonies see G. Padmore, op.cit., pp.320 ff.

République", Kouyaté advised members of the L.D.R.N. to ignore the patriotic effusions of this deluded Negro. The choice before French Negroes in France, argued Kouyate, lay between the L.D.R.N. and the "fourriers (sergeant-majors) de l'imperialisme" represented by Diagne and Candace.⁶⁷

The L.D.R.N. also took up the cause of the North African nationalists, notably the l'Etoile Nord-Africaine of Messali Hadj (which was in fact being infiltrated by the French party at the time), as well as the Indo-Chinese nationalists. On the Negro question, it divided areas of Negro discontent (following the Comintern's classification) as follows: (a) Colonised Negroes in Africa (British, French, Belgian, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian; Dutch, French and British Indies. (b) Negroes in the semi-colonies - Haiti. (c) Negroes in the U.S.A. (d) Ethiopia and Liberia. As for the strategy of liberation for these areas, the L.D.R.N. had no clear answer except the utopian programme characteristic of Pan-Negroism during that period: "Le prejuge de race aura recu le jour ou un grand Etat negre sera constitue sur des bases modernes: sionisme africain. Les peuples s'aimeront parce qu'ils vivront dans le cadre de la liberte nationale et de l'egalite internationale".⁶⁸

The L.D.R.N., however, had a more clearcut programme for the Negro in the French empire, and one of the key issues in its agitation was the question of the representation of French subjects in the metropolitan Chamber of Deputies. Although the matter was delicate

67. Ibid., Deuxieme Annee, no. 1, Mars 1929: Tiémoho Garan-Kouyaté: "Vox Africae".

68. Ibid., "Vers l'elaboration d'un programme".

and somewhat complex, the L.D.R.N. was generally violent in its criticism of the Diagne-Candace thinking on colonial policy. In fact, it came very near to demanding political autonomy and more decentralisation of authority in the French colonies. The L.D.R.N. argued that in Algeria, for example, the deputies represented exclusively the interests of the "colons". Assimilation, it said, was merely a clever formula to protect the interests and privileges of French Europeans in the colonies. Against Diagne's case for "symbolic" representation, the L.D.R.N. argued for proportional representation: "La représentation proportionnelle, faute de mieux, nous garantirait aussi contre la trahison des députés coloniaux qui pourraient être tentés de vendre leurs frères de race.... L'assimilation sans la conséquence politique logique qu'elle comporte n'est qu'un leurre, une chimère, un mensonge servant à couvrir une politique d'exploitation à outrance que l'on craint d'afflicher au grand jour...."⁶⁹

Though preoccupied with anti-colonial activity, nationalism and trade union politics in France, Kouyaté was also associated with the League Against Imperialism whose second conference he attended, on behalf of the L.D.R.N., at the Zoological Gardens, Frankfurt in July 1929. He was also on the editorial staff of Padmore's The Negro Worker which was published in Hamburg and later in Copenhagen. Through Negro American contacts in the League Against Imperialism,⁷⁰

69. Ibid., no.2, Avril, 1929: "La représentation parlementaire coloniale ou la panacée chimérique".

70. E.g. Roger Baldwin who represented the N.A.A.C.P. in the League Against Imperialism; Baldwin incurred the wrath of the Communist-dominated League which duly dubbed him a traitor and "liberal bourgeois American" at the Frankfurt conference of the League in 1929.

he was also able to get in touch with Negro American race organisations and to solicit assistance from them. Below is a letter from him (intercepted by the French police) to W.E.B. Du Bois whom the French Ministre de Colonies wrongly described as a "professeur a l'Université Tuskegee".⁷¹ The letter goes a long way towards dispelling the myth of non-participation of French speaking Negroes in political Pan-Africanism, and therefore merits full quotation:

29 Avril 1929

A. Monsieur W.E.B. Du Bois,
69, Fifth Avenue,
New-York City, U.S.A.

Cher Monsieur,

Notre ami M. Roger Baldwin vient de nous écrire. Il nous a informé du résultat de ses démarches auprès de vous et d'autres leaders négres des Etats-Unis a notre sujet. Nous l'avions en effet prié, au mois de Décembre 1928, de faire appel a la solidarité morale et financière de vos organisations pour nous aider dans notre lutte....

Le but de notre Ligue est l'émancipation politique, économique, morale et intellectuelle de la race nègre dans son ensemble. Il s'agit de reconquérir, par tous les moyens honnêtes l'indépendance nationale des peuples négres des colonies françaises, anglaises, belges, italiennes, espagnoles, portugaises, etc..... et de constituer en Afrique Noire un grand Etat nègre. Les peuples négres des Antilles garderont la faculté de se confédérer ou de réintégrer l'Afrique noire alors recouvrée. Nous voulons d'autre part, coordonner notre action avec vos efforts afin d'obtenir pour nos freres de race des Etats-Unis l'abrogation des 13^e et 14^e lois de la constitution américaine,⁷² l'égalité en droits politiques et civils, etc. ou bien, il appartient aux Nègres américains de nous dire ce qu'ils veulent et comment ils tendent réaliser leurs aspirations. Le point capital réside dans l'unification du mouvement nègre mondial et l'élaboration d'un mouvement commun sans jamais perdre de vue les détails de différence.⁷³ Nous pensons que

71. W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of the 'talented tenth' was the very antithesis of Booker T. Washington's view which Tuskegee Institute symbolised.

72. An error on Kouyaté's part; probably refers to the second part of Section 4, Art. 14 of the U.S. Constitution.

73. My emphasis; Tovalou Houénou stressed the same point when he visited the U.S. in 1924.

si notre race souffre tant, c'est qu'elle est dominée surtout au point de vue politique par les autres races. Ses divisions intestines, son manque d'esprit de solidarité ont toujours fait une proie facile sans cesse enrôlée dans les services d'autrui. Nous sommes cependant très attachés à l'idéal hautement humain de l'entente et de collaboration fraternelle des races. Mais nous estimons que cet idéal, pour être lourd d'avenir, demeure conditionné par notre liberté nationale et l'égalité internationale. Nous aurions tort de nous contenter de nous plaindre et de nous remettre aux autres races du soin d'émanciper la nôtre. Il est donc fort juste de louer les admirables efforts des blancs qui veulent nous aider, de leur témoigner notre profonde reconnaissance. L'expérience démontre néanmoins que l'action d'une fraction de notre race reste frappée de stérilité, si elle n'est pas soutenue d'abord par la solidarité de tous.

Ainsi Haïti tomba sous la domination en 1915 pendant que les nègres, par centaines de milliers, accouraient se faire tuer en Europe. Constatons douloureusement cette négligence de notre propre cause. Demain, l'Abyssinie et le Libéria pourraient subir le même sort. Ce serait alors l'asservissement total de toute la race. Une telle vision de notre situation générale irrite tout nègre vraiment convaincu de son égalité avec les autres éléments ethniques du monde.

.... Le secours financier que nous demandons à vous organisations serait d'ailleurs temporaire. Il nous permettra d'étendre notre action, de faire face à certaines difficultés actuelles dans la fortification de notre liaison avec les masses nègres d'Afrique et des Antilles.... Nous avons l'espoir d'être compris de vous, avant le prochain congrès nègre.

Dans l'attente d'une réponse fraternelle, nous vous prions de recevoir l'assurance de nos sentiments les meilleurs.

Pr. le Bureau Central,

Le Secrétaire Général

Signe: KOUYATÉ.⁷⁴

In May 1930 Kouyate was re-elected Secretary-General but was at the same time associated with the Comité Syndical International des Ouvrier Nègres based in Hamburg and later at Copenhagen, and with Padmore's journal The Negro Worker. Through him there was some

74. Copy of letter from Tiémoho Garan-Kouyaté, secretary general of the L.D.R.N., to Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, 29/4/1929. This letter was found in a dossier on Kouyaté and the L.D.R.N., Archives Nationales du Dahomey (Porto Novo), 1929-1931: Lettre, C.A.I. (cabinet des affaires indigènes), 25/5/29, Ministre De Colonies à M. le Gouverneur Général de l'A.O.F., Dakar, No. 567/A.P./2.

rapport between the L.D.R.N. and the International Committee of Negro Workers.⁷⁵ In the period 1930-1932 Communist influence was very much in evidence in the affairs of the L.D.R.N. and in the pages of La Race Nègre. To this tendency was added an articulate Pan-Negroism which viewed events in Haiti, America, South Africa and Indo-China as part of a world-wide struggle of coloured peoples. In 1930 also the Senegalese engineer Emile Faure became editor of La Race Nègre and president of the Central Bureau of the L.D.R.N. Other officers of the Central Bureau were:- Francois Tarpeau (vice-president), Pierre Kodo-Kossoul (vice-president), Abdou Koité (joint secretary), Stephane Rosso (general treasurer), Amady Diara (joint treasurer). Members of the Commission de Contrôle were André Béton (or Berthon) president; Dr. Leo Sajous (financial member); Ramananjato and Ibrahima Sylla. Earlier in January, Kouyaté had toured the provincial branches of the L.D.R.N. in the Bouches-du-Rhône and the Gironde, as well as Marseille and Bordeaux to organise the Negro workers.⁷⁶ At Bordeaux he was assisted by M. Durand, secretary of the Syndicat des Inscrits Maritimes (C.G.T.U.), and at Marseille the C.G.T.U. put some of its facilities, including the Club International des Marins, at Kouyaté's disposal. At a meeting at Marseille on January 19th, 380 Negroes reorganised their section into the Bouches-du-Rhône section of the L.D.R.N. and elected an ethnically balanced bureau which was constituted as follows: M. Alfred Aféné, a merchant (president); M. Pierre Baye, a merchant

75. See La Race Nègre, Quatrième Année, no. 3, Nov.-Dec. 1930.

76. A detailed account of Kouyaté's movements in France in 1930 is contained in the dossier on him (1929-1931) which can be found at the Archives Nationales du Dahomey at Porto Novo, no. 567 A.P./2.

(secretary); M. Cyprien Sodonou, merchant (treasurer), Benoît-Michel Diagne (Wollof), Bakary Samba Traoré (Sarancolé), Lucien Chicaya (Congolese), Navé Diakité (Bambara), Sy (Toucouleur), Ambruse Mendy (Mandiago), Germain Hodorou (Dahomean), Alexandre Modès (Antilles) and Louis Daouda (Soussou).⁷⁷ In the Seine section Amadou N'Diaye a Senegalese, was elected president, Mme. Jeanne Kodo-Kossoul, secretary, and M. Ludovic M. Lacombe, treasurer. In the Gironde section Charles Carvalho a shipwright (secretary), Victor Déric a student of literature (secretary) and Calixte Dolaure Clairisse a hotel proprietor (treasurer).

Throughout the period 1929-1931, Kouyaté denied any connection either with the French party or with Profintern organisations, although it was known that some L.D.R.N. members were officials of the Syndicat Nègre which spoke in the name of the L.D.R.N. but published a Communist inspired journal Le Cri des Nègres which was smuggled into the colonies. Kouyaté vigorously denied M. Francois Coty's allegation that Pan-Negro organisations, including the L.D.R.N. were either being infiltrated by the Communists or were already being managed and financed by them.⁷⁸ Coty, he said, was

77. La Race Nègre, Troisième Année, no. 2, Fev.-Mars 1930; also A.N.D. dossier: Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre: Institut Nègre de Paris, confidential letter no. 865, C.A.I. 9/5/1930: "A.S. de la Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre et du Syndicat Nègre" and enclosure, letter no. 459, 14/4/30, Le Delegue du Service de Controle et d'Assistance en France des Indigenes to Monsieur le Directeur des Affaires Politiques, Ministère des Colonies, Paris.

78. La Race Nègre, Troisième Année, no. 2, Fev.-Mars 1930: "Francois Coty, Directeur de "L'Ami du Peuple" a Colombie". The article by M. Coty was entitled "l'Organisation de la revolte noire" and appeared in l'Ami du Peuple, 6/12/1929. C.f. G. Gautherot, op.cit., footnote 1, p. 271.

one of those journalists who saw a communist plot everywhere:

"Il voit rouge, il voit le communisme partout; Il nous accuse d'avoir reçu l'or de Moscou. Qu'il l'établisse sans détail A l'entendre, ce sont les communistes qui donnent l'idée de patrie africaine, de l'indépendance nationale aux nègres. On voit qu'il ignore l'histoire de la race nègre et les antiques civilisations négro-africaines."⁷⁹

The French Government, however, was hostile to the L.D.R.N., and viewed even its cultural activities as subversive. When, for example, in February 1930, the Comité Universel de l'Institut Nègre de Paris (similar to its contemporary, the West African Students Union in London) was founded at the inspiration of Dr. Leo Sajous and Kouyate, both men were described by the administration as "membres actifs de 'la Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre' qui manifeste une attitude révolutionnaire et nettement anti-française".⁸⁰ The president of the new Comité was Dr. Leo Sajous of Haiti, with Kouyate, described as 'etudiant en lettres', as Secretary-General. The secretary was Mlle. Helene Jodfard, a dentist; the treasurer was Emile Faure the Senegalese engineer we have already referred to in connection with the L.D.R.N., and advisers included M. Guerrier and M. Samuel Stefany, both lawyers. M. Du Coudret observed in his dispatch that although the Comité was not actually receiving funds on behalf of the L.D.R.N., and although its constitution stated that it eschewed "toute action politique ou religieuse" and was merely

79. Ibid.

80. A.N.D. dossier on Kouyaté and the L.D.R.N., M. Du Coudret to M. le Gouverneur Général de l'A.O.F., Dakar; Paris 2/5/1930, lettre no. 804.

interested in receiving national and international subscriptions to serve its purpose as a cultural, intellectual and art centre for all Negroes,⁸¹ it was the opinion of the French government that the Comite was merely another cleverly disguised communist front organisation:

Le Président, le Secrétaire général et le trésorier sont membres de la Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre et leurs sympathies politiques sont acquiesces au parti communiste Le Dr. Sajous croit que cette administration doit accuser les dirigeants de vouloir se servir de cette organisation dans un but politique, communiste alors qu'il n'y pas un seul communiste qui soit inféode au parti Il accuse cette administration et le Ministre de Colonies d'avoir donné à COTY des renseignements mensongers que ce journaliste a exploité contre la Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre. Il ajoute que les peuples coloniaux sont en revolte contre les puissances dites protectrices qui les exploitent et les assassinent par des travaux forcés.

Il ajoute que lui personnellement est communiste mais il n'appartient pas au parti; il lutte pour la liberation des peuples....⁸²

Dr. Leo Sajous was also among those French intellectuals in Paris who in the late 20s and 30s led the intellectual revolt against French civilisation and published the short-lived literary journal la Revue du Monde Noir which appeared in French and English. Associated with Sajous were Rene Maran of Batouala fame, Dr. Jean Price-Mars (who was later in the 30s to formulate the theory of negritude with Leopold Senghor, Cesaire and Leon Damas), Claude Mackay, Mlle Andree Nardal and the Achille brothers. Another more radical and politically minded group, which at one time included Sajous, published Le Cri des Nègres which was communist in orientation, and was shortly banned.⁸³ In the early 30s also,

81. Ibid., see statutes of the Comité Universelle de l'Institut Nègre de Paris in letter no. 668, C.A.I., 7/4/1930.

82. Ibid., "Rapport de Desire", 19/3/1930, in letter no. 668, C.A.I. 7/4/1930.

83. Lilyan Kesteloot, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

another younger group of West Indian mulatto middle class students led by Etienne Lero, Rene Menil and Jules Monnerot, started a cultural journal called Legitime Defense whose ideas directly influenced the thinking of Senghor, Césaire and Price-Mars. This new student group embraced communist ideology and surrealism, following Marx, Freud, Rimbaud and André Breton in their criticism of European civilisation.⁸⁴ Dr. Sajous' group also contributed to the contact between Negro American writers and West Indian and African students in Paris. The Negro question in America, the Harlem Renaissance and the works of Claude Mackay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown and Counttee Cullen were seriously being discussed in these student circles at the time. Miss Nardal, who founded the Revue du Monde Noir, also opened a literary salon where Africans, Negro-Americans and West Indians met, Professor Alain Locke, Felix Eboue, Price-Mars and Claude Mackay among them.⁸⁵

Meanwhile on the political front, Kouyaté continued his militant agitation and frequently lambasted the Negro deputies. Diagne's acceptance of a post at Geneva in 1930 where he defended forced labour in the French colonies, did not escape Kouyaté's anger. In a violent and sarcastic editorial he ridiculed Diagne's latest promotion as political and moral suicide, and as the zenith of Diagne's "treason" against the black race. Diagne and Camace ("ces deux tristes sires ces deux freres siamois") said Kouyate, had betrayed the Negro and therefore did not deserve to be re-elected.⁸⁶

84. Ibid., pp. 29-62.

85. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

86. La Race Nègre, Quatrième Année, Juillet 1930: "M. Diagne s'est Suicidé".

These attacks, together with Kouyaté's open flirtation with the Communist Party, soon led to a dispute between him and the Commission de Contrôle of the L.D.R.N. In 1931, after an internal dispute lasting about five months, he was not re-elected to the Central Bureau, whose officers were now: Émile Faure (president), F. Tarpeau (vice-president), Abdou Koité, a student (Secretary-General), and Amady Diarra (treasurer). André Béton, Dr. Leo Sajous (who was now Liberia's chargé d'affaires in Paris and Consul General of Haiti in Poland) and M. Ibrahim Sylla remained members of the Commission de Contrôle. At the time no clear reason was given for Kouyate's dismissal, though it appears that misappropriation of funds, extremism and too close an association with the French Party and international communist organisations, were the main reasons.⁸⁷ Oddly enough, André Béton and Émile Faure, two leading L.D.R.N. officials were also condemned in the course of the 'purge' and were labelled 'provocateurs'. Béton was condemned for using the L.D.R.N. for his personal political propaganda, but was not expelled. Faure was accused of 'treason' against the L.D.R.N. It was alleged that as a result of a disagreement on objectives between Faure and the L.D.R.N., Faure had set the police on to the L.D.R.N. and certain documents were confiscated as a result of which Kouyate, Mme. Kossoul and Stephane Rosso were arrested, and the L.D.R.N. compromised; it was also alleged that a document purporting to be the plan for an insurrection in the Cameroons had also been planted on the L.D.R.N.⁸⁸ Mme. Raymonde Danaë was elected president of the Commission de Contrôle of the L.D.R.N. in place of Faure.

87. Ibid., no. 4, Avril, 1931.

88. Ibid.

Perhaps a more plausible explanation of the in-fighting in the L.D.R.N., apart from Kouyaté's embezzlement, is that government hostility to the L.D.R.N., and the latter's radicalism and nationalism tended to frighten away potential Negro members. Moreover, Kouyaté had widened the activities of the L.D.R.N. by representing it on radical trade union platforms and international organisations of the Comintern. In public, however, the L.D.R.N. attributed its troubles to the hostility of the Paris press and the opposition of white organisations. It also claimed that its line was neutral and Pan-Negro:

Les impérialistes blancs ont une qualité fondamentale qui semble manquer à notre race, et qui est l'instinct de leur intérêt collectif immédiat. En présence d'une Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre, qui, malgré toutes les propositions alléchantes, refuse de dévier de sa ligne politique nègre, à droite comme à gauche, cet instinct a conduit l'impérialisme à tenter de nous noyer. Dans un but de division, de confusion et de contradiction, il pousse de tous côtés à la formation de groupements nègres politiques ou politiques, tous tributaires de quelques groupes de blancs.⁸⁹

The L.D.R.N. also argued that surrounded and infiltrated by white controlled Negro organisations with anti-radical views, it was incapable of functioning effectively. It also asserted that although it had accepted the resolutions relating to the alliance of Negro workers with the international trade union movement passed at the Fifth Congress of R.I.L.U. held in Moscow in 1930, it was by no means a Communist front: "Notre but est clair: il est l'indépendance pure et simple". It was not a pro-Communist and it was opposed to those like Kouyaté, whom it called "communistes à la manque".

89. Ibid., Cinquième Année, no. 1, Février 1932; "To Be or Not To Be".

Finally, the L.D.R.N. alleged that Kouyaté had been paid by the Communists to infiltrate and disorganise the L.D.R.N. which was mainly concerned with independence of Negro peoples:

L'ancien Secrétaire Général Tiómoho Garan-Kouyaté.... a eu la meilleure part du gâteau bolshevique. Ce tire-au-flanc a maintenant un salaire fixe, ses déplacements payés en France et à l'étranger (et nous savons qu'il sait faire ses notes de frais). Quelques membres sans discipline, se solidariserent au début avec lui, le prenant pour une victime, car le Bureau Central refusait toute explication Pour amadouer son monde, Kouyaté étale un prétendu programme qu s'amplifie d'un moi à l'autre et qui n'est que la litanie des principales revendications nègres. Par un sophisme bien usé il laisse entendre que ceux⁹⁰ qui ne sont pas avec lui sont contre ce prétendu programme....

Kouyaté went over to the more militant l'Union des Travailleurs Nègres, taking a part of the L.D.R.N. with him. Whatever his weaknesses may have been, it is clear that his departure greatly weakened the L.D.R.N., which ceased to function between 1932 and 1933. His splinter group, confused by the government with the L.D.R.N., published the Cri des Nègres, and in November 1930 participated in the Sixth National Congress of the C.G.T.U., accepted its programme, and called upon all Negro workers in France and in the colonies to do the same.⁹¹ In its declaration to the

90. Ibid.

91. A.N.D. dossier: "Affaires Politiques, 25/4/32: Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre: Institut Nègre de Paris", enclosure to no.1438, C.A.I., December 1931; Le Ministre Des Colonies à Monsieur le Gouverneur General de l'Afrique Occidentale Française à Dakar, 7/12/1931; the enclosed resolutions, which are too lengthy to be quoted here, included equal legal rights for Negro workers in France, social benefits, freedom to travel between France and the colonies, access to all workers' unions in France, freedom of Negroes to form political and labour organisations in France, an eight-hour day, more opportunities for Negro soldiers. In the colonies, they demanded the right to form trade unions and to strike; primary and elementary education as well as adult education for workers, and freedom of the press etc. See L.R.D.N. resolution: "Aux Travailleurs Nègres de France et des Colonies".

Negroes of the world, it stated that the Negro was oppressed and discriminated against both in America and in Africa, and that its aim was the political and economic liberation of oppressed peoples. It also rejected the idea that it was "une 'creation de Moscou", admitting that its members belonged to socialist or radical parties. The Communist Party, however, was its ally:

Mais notre programme s'était et reste toujours un programme essentiellement révolutionnaire, puisque ce programme tend à libérer des millions de nègres des chaînes de la servitude impérialiste. Ni le parti radical, ni même le parti socialiste ne reconnaissent aux nègres le droit de libération totale; le parti communiste seul a inscrit dans son programme le droit pour les nègres à aspirer à leur liberté politique et à l'indépendance nationale. Ce point commun entre notre programme et celui du parti communiste a suffi pour nous faire taxer de communisme il serait injuste de notre part si nous n'accordions pas notre sympathie au seul parti politique qui soit disposé à aider les nègres dans leur lutte pour la Justice, la liberté et la libération.⁹²

While the L.D.R.N. was temporarily disorganised, Kouyaté assumed leadership of the militant Union des Travailleurs Nègres, and seems to have made a great impression on George Padmore who was then head of the African section of the Profintern.⁹³ Possibly, through Padmore's influence, Kouyaté succeeded in interesting African students in Paris in Negro-American and Pan-African affairs. In a letter to W.E.B. Du Bois in 1934, Padmore stated that the Negro

92. Ibid., enclosure to no. 329, C.A.I., 7/3/1932: "Aux nègres du monde entier".

93. James R. Hooker: Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path From Communism to Pan-Africanism (Pall Mall Press, London, 1967), pp. 33, 37-38. Although Hooker has only briefly discussed the French African contribution to the development of Pan-Africanism in the 20s and 30s, his study of Padmore's interesting career has established beyond doubt the very complex relationships between various Pan-Negro organisations during that period.

problem was discussed at a conference of young Negroes in Paris organised by Kouyaté: "It was the most serious political discussion which I have ever listened to among Negroes. The Conference decided to take the initiative to convene a Negro World Unity Congress, for the purpose of hammering out a common program of action around which world unity among the blacks can be achieved I took the opportunity of informing the French Negroes about the work of the NACP [sic] and your work in connection with the Pan-African movement"⁹⁴ This phase in the history of Pan-Africanism was certainly a major turning point, for it was at this stage, after Padmore had dropped his Comintern shackles, that close co-operation between him and Du Bois began, when the 'father of Pan-Africanism' was brought into 'contact with the wider world of the new-style Pan-Africanists'.⁹⁵

In 1934, the L.D.R.N. re-emerged in time to celebrate Diagne's death and N. Galandou Diouf's electoral victory that year. It admitted that its agitation for Negro emancipation and its claim to reflect Negro opinion in the French empire had been largely nullified

94. Padmore to Du Bois, 17/2/1934, quoted in Hooker, op.cit., pp.39-40. It will be recalled that Kouyaté himself had written a similar letter to Du Bois as early as 1929. Unfortunately, the letter was intercepted by the French police; see footnote 69. Padmore erred in telling Du Bois that Kouyaté was the editor of La Race Nègre in 1934: Kouyaté was expelled from the L.D.R.N. in 1931 for embezzlement, among other things; he joined the l'Union des Traivailleurs Nègres, to which Hooker refers in p.41, in 1931. Like Padmore, Kouyaté's association with the Comintern ended in 1934, but in his case embezzlement, again, was one of the reasons for his expulsion. He was executed by the Nazis during the occupation of France (see Hooker pp. 37-38).

95. Ibid., p. 41.

by Diagne's re-election in 1932: "Les elections de 1932, au Sénégal, nous avaient placés dans une position internationale intenable. De quel front pouvions nous prétendre refléter l'opinion nègre, puisque le corps électoral, presque exclusivement nègre, du Sénégal, avait réélu, ou en tout cas laissé revenir en France Blaise Diagne, le défenseur, à Genève du travail forcé?"⁹⁶ Diouf, the L.D.R.N. argued, was the real victor in the rigged Senegalese elections of 1928, and his victory (which was the work of Providence) meant that the dignity of the Negro race had been re-established.⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that having removed the Communists from its ranks in 1931, the L.D.R.N. renewed its attack against them in 1934, once again claiming to be neutral in French politics and Pan-African in sympathy. It stated that it had no connection whatever with the Union des Travailleurs Nègres ('notre adversaire'), and warned all Negroes to steer clear of the other Negro newspaper Le Cri des Nègres ('financée par le Parti Communiste').⁹⁸ It went on to explain that in African political movements there were usually three blocs:

.... il y aura toujours trois sortes de ligues: Une, d'essence exclusivement raciale, et deux autres où se mêleront

96. La Race Nègre, Septième Année, no. 1, Nov.-Décembre 1934: "Notre ligne politique".

97. In fact, the L.D.R.N. did intervene in the elections of the Senegalese communes in 1934 by sending several copies of a document by Emile Faure, Abdou Diara and André Beton, which listed Diagne's 'crimes' and urged the Senegalese electors to vote for any candidate, white or black, except Diagne: La Race Nègre, Septième Année, no. 1, Nov.-Dec. 1934: "Senegal: les trois communes et le mouvement nègre".

98. Ibid.

inextricablement les intérêts nègres avec ceux des classes blanches de droite et de gauche. Cet état de choses, participe du principe: diviser pour régner, auquel s'ajoutent les manoeuvres moscoutaires pour s'approprier, par beaucoup de bruit, le bénéfice moral de nos efforts et de nos résultats.⁹⁹

The L.D.R.N. anticipated the current doctrine of non-alignment when it urged that all Negroes who were genuinely concerned with Negro emancipation ought to be indifferent to both Capitalism and Communism, as well as to metropolitan politics in general:

Les Nègres, ceux d'Afrique surtout, ne saurait s'arrêter à ces doctrines sociales d'un intérêt limité car ils ont le souvenir de leurs us et coutumes ancestraux auxquels ils veulent rester fidèles. C'est en vain qu'on leur parlera de Capitalisme et de Prolétariat, il ne voient, chez eux, que des dominateurs et des asservis. L'indifférence des Nègres de toute origine, devant les récentes convulsions politiques de la France, prouve, sans conteste, que le sort de ce pays ne les touche pas. C'est parce que notre Ligue s'attache exclusivement à n'exprimer que ce qui les touche, que nous voudrions ne pas être confondus avec ceux qui en échange de moyens financiers et d'appuis divers, ont aliéné une partie de leur indépendance.¹⁰⁰

The growth of fascism in Europe and Italian aggression against Abyssinia merely served to sharpen the Pan-Negroism of the L.D.R.N. and to make it more disillusioned with European civilisation. For example, André Beton, examining the Negro question in the light of the fascist movement in Europe concluded: "Nationaliste, j'admets tous les nationalismes, je suis avec ceux qui crient: l'Allemagne aux Allemands, la France aux Français, mais je ne m'arrête pas là j'ajoute: l'Inde aux Indiens, l'Afrique aux Africains"¹⁰¹ In 1935 the L.D.R.N., like most Negro political groups, adopted a 'back to Africanity' and 'down with the Europeans' outlook in response to

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., "Chacun chez soi".

the Italo-Ethiopian crisis.¹⁰² In a very long editorial, only parts of which can be quoted here, the L.D.R.N. condemned European education and the 'intellectualisme stérile ou l'individu' of European civilisation as the enemy of the Negro. Negro African civilisations, it asserted, symbolised humanity, diversity and fraternity, as opposed to European individualism, uniformity and what it called the 'fetishism of European science' which, it said, must not be confused with progress, as Europe was already preparing for its own civil war. The L.D.R.N. repeated the utopian argument that the only way to prevent the humiliation and exploitation inherent in colonialism was to create a Pan-African state in which all Africans (including West Indians and even North Africans) could live in harmony:

Nous voulons retrouver notre indépendance politique et ressusciter, à sa faveur, notre antique civilisation nègre. Le Retour aux usages de nos ancêtres, à leurs philosophies, à leurs organisations sociales, est une nécessité vitale. Nous n'avons que faire de singer des blancs qui d'ailleurs n'ont pas de doctrine définie Notre race est le champion d'un système humain dont on sentira bientôt la nécessité grande.

Nous sommes la fraternité contre l'individualisme féroce des Occidentaux.

Nous sommes la variété opposée à l'uniformité blanche, qui engendre l'ennui.

Nous sommes créateurs de civilisations paysanne et artistique D'ailleurs, en aucune manière nous ne pouvons admettre que le sort de la race nègre dépende du bon plaisir d'une autre race

Nous voulons un Etat Nègre unique englobant toute l'Afrique noire et les Antilles et, au sein de cet Etat, nous ferons la question des races ce qu'elle était avant: un élément de diversités, d'agréments et de compétitions joyeuses et non un prétexte à des antipathies bileuses Et dans cet Etat, où

102. Cf. Lilyan Kesteloot, op.cit., p. 20.

les Nord Africains, s'ils le veulent, pourront adhérer....¹⁰³

And in a savage attack on the budding Negro surrealists and the new nègritude school of thought the editorial added:

Ceux qui, aplatis par des siècles d'oppression, n'osent plus porter le moindre intérêt à ce qui émane de leur race et cherchent, dans une soumission à la culture blanc, une base possible d'évolution pour nous, ignorent que les civilisations ne sont pas faites pour quelques intellectuels mais pour les peuples, qu'elles n'ont pas une origine artificielle, mais que leurs racines est dans la nation Il est légitime de vouloir continuer ces apports à l'humanité en restant nous-mêmes.¹⁰⁴

The L.D.R.N. viewed Italian aggression in Abyssinia as a conflict between white and black, but unlike most Negro groups, it praised Great Britain for her efforts to preserve the independence of Abyssinia. It also recognised the useful work the communist party had done for American Negroes in the Scottsboro case, but insisted that this was one of those very rare occasions when the communists did not act strictly in the interests of their party. Various resolutions on the Abyssinian crisis were passed at several protest meetings of the L.D.R.N., and Negroes in France were even invited to volunteer for service in Abyssinia. France was condemned for conniving at Italy's aggression, and the opportunity was seized to pillory the Negro deputies for their failure to follow race conscious Negroes in America, the West Indies and Africa in condemning Italian aggression. But what, the L.D.R.N. said, could

103. La Race Nègre, Huitième Année, no.1, Juillet 1935; "Nous Voulons".

104. Ibid. This attack against cultural synthesis by a group of French Negro intellectuals against the Senghor-Césaire group may perhaps come as a surprise to those scholars who have tended to concentrate on the intellectual origins of nègritude to the exclusion of other groups and strands of thought.

one expect from 'impudent clowns' and 'renegades'?'¹⁰⁵

In the mid-thirties the L.D.R.N. began to show some interest in Negro protest organisations in Great Britain, just as it had shown similar interest in Garveyism in the 20s. La Race Nègre occasionally reported on the activities of The League of Coloured Peoples led by Dr. Harold A. Moody of Jamaica, and whose journal was The Keys; The Negro Welfare Association which was connected with the League Against Imperialism through its secretary Mr. Reginald Bridgeman; and the International African Friends of Ethiopia whose secretary was C.L.R. James and whose members included Kenyatta, Padmore, Mrs. Amy Ashwood Garvey, Arnold Ward and Sam Manning of Trinidad. The L.D.R.N. paid special attention to the protests of the International Friends of Ethiopia against Italian aggression. In turn the L.D.R.N. held joint meetings with the l'Etoile Nord-Africaine in Paris on behalf of Ethiopia and as a demonstration of racial solidarity.¹⁰⁶ Nationalist hopes of a more liberal colonial policy under the Popular Front Government, however, were soon disappointed; for although laws relating to trade unionism and political parties in the colonies were partly relaxed during the Popular Front regime, the administration was determined not to tolerate nationalist and liberation movements either in France or in the colonies. Moreover, Moscow's support of the Popular Front policy also meant that militant anti-colonial and nationalist groups

105. Ibid., Neuvième Année, no. 1, Jan.-Fev. 1936: "Epurons notre race".

106. Ibid., Gaston Choubelle: "Les Organisations Nègres d'Angleterre". For further details of the Negro protest movement in France on the Italo-Ethiopian question see ibid., "En France: Hommage aux bonnes volontés".

would be deprived of the support of left-wing metropolitan parties. In 1937 both the Etoile Nord Africaine and the L.D.R.N. were suppressed and Emile Faure, president of the L.D.R.N. as well as secretary of the pan-nationalist Rassemblement Coloniale, was arrested and banished to the Sahara for the rest of the war.¹⁰⁷ The L.D.R.N., like its American counterpart the U.N.I.A. did not achieve much by way of influencing government; like the U.N.I.A. also, its influence on Negro thinking and on the development of Pan-Africanism has either been minimised or has not been investigated. As Daniel Guerin rightly complained in his interesting criticism of Padmore's Pan-Africanism or Communism? French Negroes like Emile Faure (Lamine Senghor, Tovalou Houénou, Kouyaté and Dr. Leo Sajous) have not been given sufficient credit for their equally important contribution to the development of Pan-Africanism.¹⁰⁸ It is hoped that this chapter will help to correct this bias and to illustrate some of the lesser known influences in the complex history of Pan-Africanism.

107. George Padmore Pan-Africanism or Communism? (London, Dennis Dobson, 1956), p. 335.

108. Daniel Guerin to Padmore, 18/9/1956, quoted in James R. Hooker, op.cit., p. 128.

CHAPTER VIIIPRELUDE TO MANCHESTER: PAN-AFRICAN RADICALISM AND PROTEST,
1935-1939

In Chapter VII we examined in detail the anti-colonial activities of a Marxist-oriented pan-African organisation in Paris during the inter-war period; in this chapter we shall examine the activities of a similar group on the English-speaking side which, like the Ligue de la Défense de la Race Nègre, also claimed to be neutral as far as other ideological systems were concerned. By 1936, with the demise of the Pan-African movements in the United States, in West Africa and in Paris, together with Negro disenchantment with the performance of the Comintern in the colonial sphere, and the rise of the fascist movement in Europe, Pan-African ideas and activity had come to be centred around a small group of West Indian and African intellectuals and agitators in Britain. Pan-African thought and activity during these years can therefore be seen both as the reaction of politically disillusioned young Negroes and as a radical protest movement against fascism and colonialism. In 1936 this group began to formulate a new ideology of colonial liberation designed to challenge existing ideological systems, including Communism. The key figures in this new movement were "renegades" like Padmore and C.L.R. James, Jomo Kenyatta, T. Ras Makonnen (alias Thomas Griffiths) of British Guiana, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson (Sierra Leone) and Sam Manning (Trinidad). In 1934 they formed The International African Friends of Abyssinia "to arouse

the sympathy and support of the British public for the victim of Fascist aggression and 'to assist by all means in their power in the maintenance of the territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia'." ¹ In 1937 they set up the International African Service Bureau, which was merged into the Pan-African Federation in 1944. These new institutional Carriers of Pan-African ideas held political views independent of both the Liberal-humanitarians, the Communists, and such organisations as Dr. Harold Moody's League of Coloured Peoples and the Negro Welfare Association. Their aim was to organise a united front among the scattered segments of the Pan-African aggregate, and this solidarity was to be used to strengthen nationalist movements in Africa and the West Indies with the view of creating socialist states in those areas, to aid all minority coloured groups in Britain and the United States, and to engage in constant propaganda both in Britain and abroad, on behalf of Negro peoples. ² The new Negro revolt, in which one could detect the origins of a later ideology, has been described by one of its leading architects:

This period was one of the most stimulating and constructive in the history of Pan-Africanism. It was then that Congress had to meet the ideological challenge from the Communist opportunists on the one hand and the racist doctrines of the Fascists on the other, and to defend the programme of Pan-Africanism - namely, the fundamental right of black men to be free and independent and not to be humbugged by those who preached acceptance of the status quo in the interest of power politics. It was also at this period that many of the Negro intellectuals who were later to emerge as prominent personalities in the colonial nationalist movements began to

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1. G. Padmore: Pan-Africanism or Communism? p. 145.
 2. St. Clair Drake: Value Systems, Social structure and Race Relations in the British Isles (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1954), pp. 110-112.

make a detailed and systematic study of European political theories and systems (Liberalism, Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Imperialism, Fascism), and to evaluate these doctrines objectively - accepting what might be useful to the cause of Pan-Africanism and rejecting the harmful. In this way the younger leaders of the Congress were able to build upon the pioneering work of Dr. Du Bois and formulate a programme of dynamic nationalism, which combined African traditional forms of organisation with Western political party methods....³

I

IMPACT OF THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CRISIS ON PAN-AFRICAN THOUGHT

The main impetus to the new utopian thought-style in the mid-thirties was provided by Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia. Technically, the issue was an international one involving the sovereignty of a small state and the question of collective security in the peaceful settlement of disputes, but in the eyes of the new Pan-Africanists it represented fascist aggression against a 'black' state (and therefore, in their view and in the view of most articulate Negroes, against all coloured peoples) and Europe's cynical connivance at such flagrant breach of international law.⁴

3. G. Padmore, op.cit., p. 151.

4. Commenting on the reactions of the newspaper press in West Africa to the Ethiopian crisis, one writer observed "... the war was portrayed as an important aspect of the nationalist cause in West Africa. In the eyes of the press the struggle was essentially a racial war; Italy stood for the worst aspects of European greed and immorality and Abyssinia represented the Negro cause. No doubt could possibly be entertained that, on grounds of nationalist solidarity, the press was violently hostile to Italy.... Moreover, the press was at pains to point out that what occurred in Abyssinia concerned directly other parts of Africa. West Africa was taught that Italy's attack upon Abyssinia was but another aspect of white aggression upon black." W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., pp. 118-119.

This new unity of race feeling against the white oppressor had already been stressed by Du Bois who warned an indifferent Negro public that when it came to the question of survival the Negro

..must calmly face the fact that however much he is an American there are interests which draw him nearer to the dark peoples outside of America than to his white fellow citizens.... And those interests are the same matters of color caste, of discrimination, of exploitation for the sake of profit, of public insult and oppression, against which the colored peoples and every country in Asia, complain and have long been complaining these people should draw together in spiritual sympathy and intellectual co-operation, to see what can be done for the freedom of the human spirit which happens to be incased in dark skin.... This was the idea that was back of the Pan-African Congresses.

He defined Pan-Africanism as

intellectual understanding and co-operation among all groups of Negro descent in order to bring about at the earliest possible time the industrial and spiritual emancipation of the Negro peoples.⁵

This "spiritual sympathy and intellectual co-operation" among Negroes was intensified by the rise of fascism in Europe and the apparent readiness of certain European Powers to appease the Dictators with African territory. Padmore argued in 1935 that Italian imperialism in Africa was a greater threat to world peace than Nazism. After tracing the complicated diplomatic background to the Ethiopian crisis, he went on to describe Pierre Laval's agreement with Mussolini in Rome (whereby France agreed to give Italy a piece of French Sahara, French Somaliland and part of her shares in the Abyssinian railway) as

the most glaring example of the united front of white Europe against black Africa. It should serve to open the eyes of Negroes the world over, that white nations, regardless

5. W.E.B. Du Bois: "Pan-Africa and New Racial Philosophy", The Crisis, vol. 40, no. 11, Nov. 1933, p. 247.

of their political systems, have no scruples in joining hands in assigning parts of Africa to whichever one stands most in need of colonies.... In other words, Africa is not worth while for whites to fight over....⁶

Padmore also attributed Europe's equivocal attitude to Italian aggression in Ethiopia to a secret desire on the white man's part for revenge against the only coloured nation apart from Japan, to have defeated white troops. He also attributed Europe's indecisiveness to a general feeling among Europeans that 'abstract justice' could not be applied in the case of Ethiopia because she was 'not a civilized nation'; moreover, Ethiopia was the only independent African state determined to thwart European penetration.⁷

In West Africa, the whole English-speaking press protested against and condemned Italian aggression. From the very outset the Sierra Leone Weekly News warned its readers:

We in West Africa are not disinterested in this Italo-Abyssinian situation, for our past experience has taught us that though out of the "heats", we cannot escape the "finals".⁸

Vox Populi (Gold Coast) declared with equal conviction:

The Italo-Abyssinian crisis is teaching the world a new and useful lesson, especially the members of the African race. It is revealing to us what is at the back of the mind of the European powers against the weaker peoples of the world and

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6. G. Padmore: "Ethiopia in World Politics", The Crisis, May 1935, vol. 42, no. 5, p. 139.
 7. Ibid., p. 157. In this connection, i.e. the equation of European aggression against an African state with racism and as an attack on African racial sovereignty, the article by Ali Mazrui is most illuminating: Ali A. Mazrui: "Consent, Colonialism, and Sovereignty", Political Studies (Oxford) vol. 11, 1963, pp. 36-55; also Mazrui: Towards A Pax Africana (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), Ch. 2 'On the principle of Racial Sovereignty'.
 8. Sierra Leone Weekly News, 3/8/1935.

impresses it upon us that no reliance should be placed in the most solemn promise or in the most sacred treaty made by a European power with a subject race.⁹

In Lagos, the Nigerian Daily Times asserted in late 1935:

The feelings of the Africans have been more hotly aroused because Italian aggressiveness towards Abyssinia is a return to the old European game of making African lands theirs, to be seized at will upon any pretext however grotesque.... Italy's decision to gratify her economic wants at the expense of Abyssinia is, therefore, League or no League, a crime of the first order.¹⁰

And Vox Populi, as authoritative as ever, again advised its readers:

"What we should like to impress on the inhabitants of this country is that war with Abyssinia is our war."¹¹

I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, who studied in Moscow in 1931-32, and had formed the West African Youth League in the Gold Coast in early 1936, argued in the Gold Coast Spectator that while in Europe in 1933, he had studied the policy of the League of Nations towards smaller states and had come to the conclusion that before peace and inter-racial harmony could be established, "every nation and every race upon the face of the earth must first of all have a sort of economic,

9. Vox Populi, 11/9/1935. Such comment was typical of the reaction of many West African newspapers to the Italo-Ethiopian crisis; see W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., p. 95, footnote 3. Edmonds, however, does not sufficiently assess the impact of the crisis on West African attitudes to Europeans in general, nor does he deal with press reactions to the Scottsboro case in the United States. The 1930's not only witnessed extensive commentary in the West African press on the economic depression, but also a growing preoccupation with racial discrimination and economic exploitation by Europeans, and increasing criticism of 'Europeanism' and its dangers to African society.

10. Nigerian Daily Times, 5/10/1935.

11. Vox Populi, 9/10/1935.

political, social and religious emancipation".¹² He argued that independent African States such as Liberia and Ethiopia, i.e. "those independent African States holding a sort of National Independence Charter and have been inveigled into the diplomatic net of the League....", had very little chance of survival in a world of power politics. He also argued that both Germany and Japan had left the League for good reasons - Germany because she felt cheated by the Versailles Treaty, and Japan because the Allies refused to concede racial equality - and that Japan's aggression in Manchuria was 'different' from Italy's aggression against Ethiopia.¹³ Wallace-Johnson was surprised that Russia, which had condemned the League as a "Capitalist Clique", should join it in the 30's:

Her changed front was a surprise to me and it set my brain a-working in an effort to find out what the result of such co-operation would be in the near future, and also whether the injunction of Lenin that Russia should always defend the world's proletarians and assist the coloured races especially the colonial peoples toward the achievement of national independence, is now to be cast into the dustbin as a political refuse.

What Wallace-Johnson probably did not know was that Russia's Popular Front tactics and her abandonment of ideology to suit short-term interests, was also worrying the conscience of many other Negro Marxists who were tentatively searching for a pro-Negro doctrine - an ideological alternative to both Communism and Capitalism. On the other hand, Wallace-Johnson was so disillusioned with Europe that he

12. I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson: "The League and the Africans As One Sees It: Ethiopian War should be eye-opener to Africans", The Gold Coast Spectator, 11/1/1936, p. 46.

13. Ibid.

came to advise Africans to formulate their own religion and turn away from what he called 'capitalistic Christianity', particularly Roman Catholicism.¹⁴ He asserted that Africans must develop their own civilisation and must not allow themselves to be deceived by European civilisation nor must they let their national aspirations be suppressed by the 'propaganda' of European Christianity, and concluded with the pan-African battle cry:

Princes are come out of Egypt and Ethiopia has stretched forth her hands unto God through the great Emperor Haile Selassie. Africa must be free.¹⁵

The Gold Coast Spectator and The West African Pilot carried several other articles commenting on the Ethiopian crisis: one issue of The Gold Coast Spectator¹⁶ reprinted an article from WASU magazine by William Ofori Atta, son of Nana Sir Ofori Atta, on "Clogs in Our Social Machines", an article which also dealt with the Ethiopian crisis and emphasised the need for unity of action among Africans. The West African Youth League, in association with the Ex-Servicemen's Union, established in 1936 by Wallace-Johnson, set up a series of Ethiopian Defence Committees in the Gold Coast to give financial and moral support to the Ethiopians. In 1936, the Gold Coast section of W.A.Y.L. was composed as follows:-

J.J. Ocquaye (president), J.W.M. Cudjoe (vice-president),
E.D. Impraim (secretary), R.P. Nunoo (assistant secretary), Martin Sowah (treasurer), C.E.O. Williams (financial secretary), C.J. Myers

14. Ibid. Wallace-Johnson may have been referring to the Roman Catholic church in Italy.

15. Ibid., p. 78.

16. The Gold Coast Spectator, 18/1/1936, p. 90.

(auditor). Committee members included J.A. Addison, E.W.N. Dowuona, C.S. Adjei, B.E. Tamakloe, and Rev. J.E. Bart-Plange; Wallace-Johnson remained its organising secretary; executive members included K. Bankole Awooner-Remmer, R.B. Wuta-Ofei, Ellis Brown, and the indomitable Miss Mary Lokko.¹⁷ At its first annual conference from March 21 to March 27, 1936, Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was then a journalist in Accra, delivered a lecture on March 24th on "Haiti - A Study of African Nationalism", while Wallace-Johnson spoke on "The West African - His economic advantages and disadvantages".¹⁸ At the end of the conference, W.A.Y.L. passed the following resolutions on the Italo-Ethiopian question:

1. having carefully and seriously considered the after effect of the 1914-1918 World War, [W.A.Y.L.] hereby registers its protest against the attitude of the formentors of war and calls upon the League of Nations to use all the influence at its disposal against the plunging of Europe into another World War that would cause the unnecessary sacrificing of the lives of Youths and particularly those of West Africa, in another carnage.

2. That this Conference also registers its serious protest against Italian aggression in Ethiopia and the murderous slaughtering of innocent Ethiopian women and children by Italian invaders and calls upon the League of Nations to denounce the aggressor in a more practical form by the application of Oil Sanctions - the only effective means of putting an end to Italian hostilities in Abyssinia.

3. That this conference calls upon all Youth Organisations, all associated and affiliated bodies of the West African Youth League to register their protest against War and against Italian aggression in Abyssinia by effective resolutions....¹⁹

17. Ibid., 25/1/1936, p. 157.

18. Ibid., 21/3/1936, pp. 490, 503.

19. "Resolutions Against War and Italian Aggression on Abyssinia", in collection of Wallace-Johnson Papers, Institute of African Studies, University of Legon (Ghana).

Psychologically, as Lord Hailey argued in an important article, just as Japan's defeat of imperial Russia in 1905 served to re-kindle Asian, particularly Indian nationalism, so did the Italo-Ethiopian conflict serve as a rallying point for race-conscious Africans in South and West Africa:

At the outset there was no striking evidence of general interest; a few meetings were held in the Union and the West Coast, and a few subscriptions collected. But as the campaign proceeded... the interest quickened. There was a phenomenal sale of the Native papers in the Union which contained articles on the struggleI cannot quote evidence that the effect went really deep or is likely to be enduring; add it may well be that to thinking Africans the fact that its three most prominent colonising nations were not competent to check the militaristic aggressiveness of a new arrival was more striking than the evidence that Europeans could still desire to possess themselves of African lands. But I feel that the Abyssinian campaign may yet be destined to have its effect on African thought, for it breaks harshly into the era of altered attitude towards the African Native which the Mandate policy had seemed to signalise.²⁰

To the West African press, the crisis could only be interpreted in terms of racial strife, cynicism and power politics; though the weaknesses of the League of Nations as a peace making body and the delays occasioned by lengthy negotiations were admitted, it was a general feeling of helplessness, humiliation and betrayal that underlay all the protest. As one paper put it, the question whether sanctions were effective was immaterial, for

it cannot be disputed that had Ethiopia been a European country, or a country inhabited exclusively by the caucasoid races, the League of Nations would have been much more energetic in its

20. Lord Hailey: "Nationalism in Africa", Journal of the Royal African Society, vol. XXXVI, no. CXLIII, April 1937, p. 143. Sir Sydney Barton, former British representative in Addis Ababa, spoke after Lord Hailey, observing that the rising power of Japan and the resistance of the Ethiopians had contributed not a little to African nationalism; see West Africa, 23/1/1937, p.51.

policy.... We make bold to say that had Ethiopia been a white country like Belgium, Holland or Greece, not only would the League have imposed economic and financial sanctions, but military and diplomatic sanctions would have been in order.... But a country which is populated by the black race has no rights which Italy, a white race, must respect, and it has no influence to challenge the League of Nations, an organisation whose membership preponderatingly belongs to the white race, to live up to the terms of its Covenant.... Now²¹ is the time for Africans to think of race and not grace....

As far as The African Morning Post was concerned, Italy's aggression symbolised not only the powerlessness of the League but also the triumph of Machiavellism and 'the betrayal of the black race':

.... the fall of Addis Ababa signifies the fall of the metropolis of the only African Kingdom existing "over here". Should Ethiopian autonomy be dismembered, it means Africans are doomed for many, many years to come, for that will shake badly all the hopes of Africans and the coloured races all over the world.... Africans, your last hope is passing. Even if you cannot fight you can at least make noise.²²

The Gold Coast Spectator's editorial furiously attacked Britain, France and above all, the League of Nations, which was portrayed as a white man's club:

Force, the white man's god, is again supreme. Addis Ababa is occupied.... Poison gas, British oil, and the white man's duplicity all combined to make the Italian advance victorious.... After the Great War the League lent money to some of the small Central Powers to rehabilitate them. But these are whites. The League refused funds to Ethiopia, even though Article XVI stipulates it. Ethiopia, being black, could not be supported, even in affliction, and her financial solicitations were treated with derision. This is the Christian nations at work!²³

The Spectator in a defiant note, concluded:

A people so jealous of their independence cannot easily submit

21. The African Morning Post, 27/4/1936, p. 4.

22. Ibid., 6/5/1936, p. 5.

23. The Gold Coast Spectator, 9/5/1936, p. 814.

to the Fascist tutelage. It must be rightly understood that it was due only to the treachery of the League of Nations that the present situation has come about.... The League will collapse notwithstanding all the smooth assurances of Anthony Eden.... And when the next war comes, Europe will realise that the African has not forgotten the white man's treachery to him nor will he ever forget it.²⁴

Wallace-Johnson, who always tended to equate European Christianity with colonial subjection,²⁵ reiterated the view he had always held about the crisis. In an interesting mixture of moral indignation, protest and exhortation, he dismissed the Italo-Ethiopian conflict as merely another instance of European 'macht-politik' which might well serve as a spur to re-awaken African national consciousness:

The white man - yea the European in this instance - has proved that Christianity and barbarism are identical. He has proved that European Christian ethics are nothing but a farce and that after all, the sum total of the Christian faith and doctrine is Blessed are the strong for they shall weaken the weak.... The whole Ethiopian Empire may be annexed by Italy. But it is just the beginning of a new struggle. It is just the opening of a new page in the history of African nationalism for which every African should be justly proud. The name of Hailie Selassie should be the slogan of Africans throughout the length and breadth of this great continent Africa's children should take a lesson from this Italo-Ethiopian war and be awake to national consciousness....²⁶

24. Ibid.

25. Wallace-Johnson was secretary of the Koppeng African Universal Church Society in Lagos between 1928 and 1932. In June 1936 he and Azikiwe were arrested for sedition as a result of an article he wrote in the African Morning Post on the subject "Has the African a God?" Perhaps there is a connection here between Wallace-Johnson's Ethiopianism and his anti-colonialism. For a detailed discussion of the various meanings of 'Ethiopianism' and its significance in early proto-nationalist movements in Africa see G.A. Shepperson: "Ethiopianism: Past and Present" in C. Baëta ed. Christianity in Tropical Africa (O.U.P., 1968), pp. 249-268.

26. I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson: "Lessons of Italo-Ethiopian War Clearly Tabled...." The Gold Coast Spectator, 16/5/1936, pp. 838, 864. As Edmonds has observed, the crisis provided West African journalists and nationalists with 'a great rallying point and the press did not neglect the many opportunities it afforded to whip up nationalist feeling', W.D. Edmonds, op.cit., p. 119.

Outside Africa, other more articulate Pan-Africanists, particularly George Padmore and C.L.R. James who were leading members of the London based Pan-African Federation, viewed the crisis in the context of world imperialism and the re-opening of the Colonial Question. In an essay on international politics²⁷ published on behalf of the Pan-African Federation, Padmore sought "to show the circumstances through which Africa came to be drawn into the orbit of Power Politics, and how this process of colonial expansion led from one crisis to another", how Italian aggression in Ethiopia became the signal for the dissatisfied "Have-Not" Powers to undermine the status quo by demanding a re-distribution of raw materials and markets, and why the League of Nations was incapable of functioning as an effective instrument of Collective Security.²⁸ Although he condemned the Soviet Union for its 'indifference' in the enforcement of sanctions against Italy and for supplying the aggressor with coal and petroleum, his main conclusion was that

Every great European Power has at some time or another entertained designs upon Abyssinia. Italy's onslaught is merely the culmination of half a century of such plotting, and represents the blackest chapter in the history of European colonial expansion in Africa.²⁹

In the same year (1937), James wrote his classic The Black Jacobins, and a lesser known work World Revolution 1917-1936 which was pro-Trotsky and was dedicated 'to the Marxist Group'.³⁰ It is

27. George Padmore: Africa and World Peace (London, Secker and Warburg, 1937).

28. Ibid., pp. 1-7.

29. Ibid., p. 123.

30. C.L.R. James: World Revolution 1917-1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International (Secker and Warburg, 1937), Preface, p. xi.

interesting to note how James used Russian opportunities over the Italo-Ethiopian conflict to attack Stalinism and denounce Stalin's 'murder' of the colonial revolution:

Only thoughtful revolutionaries, however, realise how the International, following Stalin, missed the greatest opportunity in years of at best striking a powerful blow against the colonial policy of imperialism, and at worst rallying round itself the vanguard of the working-class movement.... Nothing was more certain than that the capitalists would ultimately do a deal at the expense, large or small, of Abyssinia.... The International from the first moment could have pointed out that nothing but working-class action could have saved Abyssinia.... Abyssinia might have been saved - Abyssinia is not saved to-day - but the International would have had a chance to build up around itself a mass-resistance to wars for collective security and international law and all the shibboleths. Instead they followed the new line, driven by the Russian bureaucracy's hope that a successful sanctions policy might be a useful precedent against Germany for Russia in the future.... The whole adventure ended in ignominious failure.... If the Soviet Union, the Worker's State, had come out clearly for a boycott against all war-material to Italy or any other country which interfered in Abyssinian affairs, the hand of those working at Brussels would have been strengthened The mass feeling that had been aroused all over the world would have been directed into a single channel under the direction of the Third International.... It would have been an urgent matter for British and French imperialism to press for a solution, in order to quiet the unrest at home. Abyssinia might have escaped with a certain loss of territory... But a workers' bureaucracy cannot think in this way.³¹

Jomo Kenyatta, who was then honorary secretary of the International African Friends of Abyssinia, also contributed to the debate on the crisis with an article in The Labour Monthly,³² while to a future theoretician and leader of the Pan-African and colonial liberation movement, the news of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia

was all I needed. At that moment it was almost as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally.

31. Ibid., pp. 386-388.

32. Jomo Kenyatta: "Hands Off Abyssinia!", The Labour Monthly, vol. 17, Sept. 1935, no. 9, pp. 532-536.

For the next few minutes I could do nothing but glare at each impassive face wondering if those people could possibly realise the wickedness of colonialism, and praying that the day might come when I could play my part in bringing about the downfall of such a system. My nationalism surged to the fore....³³

II

THE PROTEST MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN AND WEST AFRICA

Although the International African Service Bureau and the Pan-African Federation never became important institutions within the framework of race-relations in Britain,³⁴ they became active instruments of protest and propaganda against colonial abuses, for the fostering of Afro-Asian solidarity and for the mobilisation of coloured protest against Italian aggression in Ethiopia. By the end of the war, and with the decline of the League of Coloured Peoples, they had become the rallying points of radical coloured groups in Britain; some of their newspapers and ideas reached parts of West Africa, where a similar protest movement was launched between 1937 and 1939.

In March 1937, the International African Friends of Abyssinia Society was replaced by the I.A.S.B. Apart from Padmore, Chris Braithwaite (alias Chris Jones) and C.L.R. James, the most influential newcomers to the new Pan-African organisation were Wallace-Johnson and Thomas Griffiths, better known as T. Ras Makonnen.³⁵

33. K. Nkrumah: Ghana: the Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 27.

34. St. Clair Drake, op.cit., p. 114.

35. Griffiths came from British Guiana and has assisted Padmore in Denmark in 1934 after the latter had been sacked from the Comintern and deported by the Germans to Denmark. Both were later deported from Denmark and sent to London. Griffiths

[Contd.]

Wallace-Johnson, who was now in London after fleeing the Gold Coast to avoid charges of sedition, became its general secretary, Padmore became chairman and James, editorial director, with Makonnen as treasurer and fund raiser. The executive committee included Chris Jones, J.J. Oquaye (Gold Coast), L. Mbanefo (Nigeria), K. Sallie Tamba (Sierra Leone), Garan Kouyatté (Soudan), N. Azikiwe (Nigeria), Gilbert Coka (South Africa). Among its patrons were Nancy Cunard, Dorothy Woodman, D.N. Pritt, Noel Baker, A. Creech Jones, Victor Gollancz, F.A. Ridley, Sylvia Pankhurst and Max Yergan.³⁶ Two short-lived papers, Africa and the World and

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35. Contd.] became an 'honorary' Ethiopian after Emperor Haile Selassie's arrival in England in 1935, and has been known as Makonnen ever since. He had a flair for business, and owned restaurants and bakers shops in Manchester in the '40's, and his business connections may have been of some value to the organisations which planned the Pan-African Congress there in 1945. With Nkrumah's rise to power, Makonnen went to Ghana where he managed the Star Brewery; was later put in charge of other corporations under the Nkrumah régime; arrested and deported from Ghana after the military coup of February 26th, 1966. I owe this information to Mr. Christopher Fyfe.
36. O.G.R. Williams to Sir Thomas Southorn, Governor of the Gambia, 27/1/1938: Gambia 4/73, File No. 179, Secret despatch 7046/3/38: "Wallace Johnson and the International African Service Bureau". Professor J.R. Hooker's Black Revolutionary quite rightly treats intelligence reports on political groups with suspicion, but it seems that this has been overdone and has tended to minimise somewhat the role of Wallace Johnson in the protest movement of the 1930's. Wallace Johnson was 'a forgotten man' in 1965 precisely because unlike several African nationalist leaders, he remained a Pan-Africanist (in fact, an internationalist) even during the agitation for independence. As he himself made clear in some of his reminiscences, he had always remained an internationalist: see Wallace Johnson Papers, Legon University, Ghana. Finally, Wallace Johnson carried on far more effective agitation in West Africa with his Youth League and West African Civil Liberties League during the period 1935-1938 than the I.A.S.B. was able to achieve anywhere in the colonies.

African Sentinel,³⁷ were also published in late 1937 by Wallace Johnson.

The I.A.S.B. claimed that it 'owed no affiliation or allegiance to any political party, organization or group in Europe'; it eschewed the Communist 'hypocrites' and the 'pettifogging reforms' of Fabians and Liberans, but was well-disposed toward the declining Independent Labour Party. It did not exclude whites, yet it was a race organisation; it eschewed Communism but most of its Negro intellectuals were Left-oriented: or, as its chief ideologist bluntly put it, they 'orientated themselves to Pan-Africanism as an independent political expression of Negro aspirations for complete national independence from white domination - Capitalist or Communist'.³⁸ The I.A.S.B. was formed primarily as a response by coloured peoples in Britain and by disillusioned young Negro Communists, to Italian aggression in Ethiopia and to fascism in general:

.... never since the emancipation of the slaves have Africans and other subject races been so awake to a realisation of the wrongs and injustices inflicted upon weak and defenceless peoples as since the brutal Italian fascist war against Abyssinia. This cold-blooded organised act of imperialist aggression against a people who had been led to place their security in the League of Nations and the Kellogg Peace Pact, demonstrated as never before that the world is still dominated by the philosophy of might over right. It has also opened

37. The African Sentinel, an early organ of the I.A.S.B., was printed in London and edited by Wallace Johnson on behalf of the West African Youth League. The first issue came out in mid 1937; the paper was concerned with all Negro problems, and dealt in particular with the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, the West African Youth League, anti-sedition laws in the colonies, and labour problems in the colonies. It was placed on the prohibition list in British West Africa.

38. G. Padmore, op.cit., p. 148.

the eyes of Africans the world over, that they have no rights which the powerfully armed nations are bound to respect. And precisely because of this they have decided to close their ranks and place their hopes for the future, not in imperialist statesmen, but in the organised will of the common people and progressive forces of all lands who are passionately devoted to the cause of peace.³⁹

The Bureau's main function was to help enlightened British public opinion by distributing literature and giving talks on the colonial problem to "the working and middle classes"; Labour Party branches, trade unions and co-operative guilds were also welcome.

The International African Opinion succeeded Wallace-Johnson's short-lived journals as the monthly organ of the I.A.S.B. in July 1938. The motto of the new journal was "Educate, Co-Operate, Emancipate: Neutral in nothing affecting the African Peoples".⁴⁰ The I.A.S.B., more familiar with the problems of Negroes in the British Empire, appealed for support to all Negroes:

Problems differ from country to country, but there is a common bond of oppression, and as the Ethiopian struggle has shown, all Negroes everywhere are beginning to see the necessity for international organization and the unification of their scattered efforts. The crisis of world civilisation and the fate of Ethiopia have awakened black political consciousness as never before....⁴¹

The journal was described as no literary paper giving advice from ivory towers but as a journal of action. Articles ranged from the American Negro and United States politics to the Ethiopian question, problems of coloured seamen, May Day in the West Indies and the

39. I.A.S.B. broadsheet.

40. See International African Opinion, vol. 1, no. 1, July, 1938. The author saw copies of this rare journal in an unmarked file of Padmore's newspaper cuttings in the former Padmore Research Library, Accra, Ghana, as well as in the Gambia Records Office.

41. Ibid.

Australian Aborigines. Like its counterpart the Ligue de la Défense de la Race Nègre in Paris, the I.A.S.B. demanded the right of African peoples to form trade unions and co-operatives, a minimum standard of wages in keeping with the cost of living; an eight-hour day; equal pay for equal work regardless of colour; removal of discrimination in the civil service against Africans and peoples of African descent; abolition of forced labour, hut and poll tax, pass laws etc.; freedom of the press, of movement and of assembly. It stated that it did not seek to dominate other pan-Negro organisations (such as those that existed in Cardiff and London), but sought to co-ordinate and centralise their activities so as 'to bring them into closer fraternal relation'.⁴²

The I.A.S.B. does not seem to have been active between 1939 and the end of the war. This period was for Padmore one of journalistic activity on subjects related to imperialism and the war, socialism, racial discrimination in the British armed forces, colonial questions from the West Indies to West Africa, and agitation on the Spanish Civil War.⁴³ On 13th April 1938 Wallace Johnson returned to Freetown, Sierra Leone after an alleged dismissal from the I.A.S.B. over financial matters, according to intelligence reports from London.⁴⁴ Johnson had been trained in trade union activities in the Soviet Union in 1932 and had attended

42. Ibid., vol. 1, no. 3, Sept. 1938.

43. For details of Padmore's activities during the war period see J.R. Hooker, op.cit., chs. 4-5.

44. O.G.R. Williams to Sir Douglas Jardine, Governor of Sierra Leone, 19/4/38, despatch no. 7046/3/38, enclosed in Gambia secret M.P. no. 179, 4/73, 22/2/38.

the International Labour Defence Congress in Moscow in November that year. He returned to England in 1933 and was for some time connected with the Negro Welfare Association and the International Trades Union of Negro Workers which was based in Hamburg. In February 1933 he returned to Lagos, then proceeded to Accra where he and Azikiwe were involved in political activity and journalism up to his arrest on charges of sedition in 1937. From 1937 to 1938 he worked with Padmore's I.A.S.B. in London, and on his return to Freetown was searched for seditious literature, two thousand copies of the African Sentinel being seized from him.⁴⁵

Wallace Johnson at once got into action in Freetown, capitalising on the unemployment and hardship resulting from the depression. Several of his meetings, which were fully attended, were held in the Wilberforce Memorial Hall. Apart from the West African Youth League he also formed the West African Civil Liberties and National Defence League on April 29th 1938. Officials of the latter body included Tregson Roberts, Mrs. Edna Horton, F.A. Miller, D.A. Yaskey and Mrs. Elsie Cummings-John, a school mistress. According to police reports, the aims and objectives of the West African Civil Liberties League had 'obviously been drawn up by the International African Service Bureau at home', and that Johnson was planning to raise enough money to start a West African press which would counter the reactionary views of the Creole bourgeois press in Freetown. The aims and objects of the League were:

(1) To protect and defend the Civil rights and liberties of the inhabitants of West Africa individually and collectively and to

⁴⁵. Ibid., Jardine to the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30/6/38.

agitate for reforms throughout the West (sic) Colonies.

(2) To collect and disseminate informations regarding social, political and economic conditions of affairs in West Africa with a view to arousing public opinions in Europe in regard to conditions of affairs in the Colonies.

(3) The maintenance of a "West African House" in London whereto all information socially, politically, economically and otherwise regarding affairs in the West African Colonies could be sent for the purpose of dissemination and from where all information that may be of value and interest to the peoples of West Africa could be easily obtained.

(4) To agitate for a responsible representative in the British Parliament.

(5) To establish, support and maintain an official national organ of articulation within the metropolis of the British Empire that would serve as a means of contact between the African peoples and the British public.⁴⁶

West Africa (June, 1938) which reported the seizure of Johnson's African Sentinel, was not sure whether Johnson's new League was 'likely to be in co-operation or competition with the existing branch of the National Congress',⁴⁷ adding that

In a Colony where such matters as workmen's compensation and even wages are still matters that call for improvement,

46. Ibid., sub-enclosure to Enclosure II in secret M.P. no. 179, 22/2/38.

47. It is unlikely that Wallace Johnson would have co-operated with the middle class Creoles who controlled this branch of the moribund N.C.B.W.A. Commissioner of Police, R.J. Craig (Sierra Leone) reported on 20/6/38 that Johnson's meetings were 'well attended by enthusiastic audiences drawn from all classes of the community, though he has received no support from any leading public men. In fact he has attacked this class consistently and he says that the African has been betrayed by his old leaders. His appeal is definitely to the wage-earner. He has made a special appeal to the Mohammedan community and numbers about 300 of them among his followers' (R.J. Craig, Enclosure II in Sierra Leone secret despatch, dated 30 June, 1938, Gambia secret M.P. no. 179, 4/73). His attitude to this class was usually one of contempt, though he did co-operate with Dr. H.C. Bankole-Bright's National Council of the Colony of Sierra Leone in the 1950s, see Martin Kilson: Political Change in a West African State: a study of the modernization process in Sierra Leone (Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 222-227.

it is not surprising that Mr. Johnson awakened an interest which will no doubt be noted, and acted upon, by members of the Legislative Council."⁴⁸

Total membership of the League was estimated at 800, monthly subscription being sixpence, but the League just about held its own financially. Johnson does not seem to have had any definite political goal such as responsible government, but was more concerned with trade union matters and in particular with the Public Works Department and the Railway workers, as well as Africans employed by European firms and with the question of racial discrimination. His West African Civil Liberties League was reported to consist of two branches - a League of Youth (presumably the local branch of the West African Youth League) and a Labour Union, though these were ineffective because of poor organisation. On the whole the authorities, as in all colonies, dismissed him as "a rascal who has found that the career of a professional agitator provides an easy living". They suspected that he planned to extend the League throughout West Africa so that he could become 'Grand President of the whole outfit'. Johnson agitated against the Education Bill, the Rural Areas Bill and the Municipal Laws; he advocated the return of the Municipal Council to African control, and equal African voting power in the Legislative Council; he even proposed altering the British Constitution to enable African representatives to go direct to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster.⁴⁹

In fact, Wallace Johnson's political activities were far more serious

48. Enclosure, p. 41, secret M.P., no. 179, 22/2/38, Gambia Record Office.

49. Commissioner of Police R.J. Craig, see footnote 47, Ch. VIII.

than the police reports indicated: Sir Douglas Jardine, the Governor knew better. On June 30th 1938 he admitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

It may be said at once that Johnson has succeeded far beyond our expectations and far beyond what his previous experience led us to anticipate. His achievement in attracting about 800 people to his "West African Civil Liberties and National Defence League" is a not inconsiderable one. His audiences have been drawn from all sections of the community; but it is noteworthy that both the press and the more prominent public men like Dr. Bankole Bright have given him the cold shoulder so far....

Nevertheless, there is no gainsaying the fact that Johnson's presence in Sierra Leone is an embarrassment; and that at any moment in the event of a strike at one of the mines he would be a potential danger to the peace and good order of the country....⁵⁰

In late November 1939, Wallace Johnson was convicted in the Sierra Leone Supreme Court of criminal libel and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Prior to his imprisonment, the Governor had already ordered his detention under Regulation 18 of the Model Colonial Defence Regulations.⁵¹

Meanwhile in London, financial squabbles among members of the I.A.S.B. led to the defection of Johnson's successor, the Nigerian Edward Sigismund (also known as Babalola Wilkey) who started a small organisation of his own called the Negro Cultural Association, affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties. Special Branch reports indicated that the latter body was being infiltrated by the British Communist Party to use it to embarrass Britain by

50. Ibid., paras. 5-6 of secret despatch, Sir Douglas Jardine to the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30/6/1938.

51. Ibid., Governor, Sierra Leone to Governor, Gambia, 6/9/39; telegram, Governor of Sierra Leone to Governor of the Gambia, 23/11/39.

convening a conference of colonial leaders in London on its behalf, 'with a view to obtaining publicity for alleged discontent in the Colonial Dependencies.... and in order to underline the contention that if Britain were fighting Germany to preserve democracy it would extend more democracy to the colonial peoples, and thus show that Britain's declared war aims are hypocritical and untrue'.⁵² It was also alleged that the Communists planned to 'arrange' an anti-colonial conference, carefully packed so that they could 'damp down the notorious trotskyite tendencies of many colonials'.⁵³ Fears of communist control of Negro organizations, however, were exaggerated, and Padmore remained in charge of the I.A.S.B. in 1939 and throughout the war, assisted by Jomo Kenyatta and Chris Jones; far from collaborating with the communists, Padmore drew closer to the I.L.P. and was virtually in charge of its colonial section. Even the Special Branch observed that the 'communist' Edward Sigismund (Babalola Wilkey) was 'unlikely to carry much weight as secretary of the Bureau' and that 'the policy of the International African Service Bureau will remain in the hands of the Trotskyist, George Padmore'.⁵⁴

52. Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies in secret circular, 19/1/1940 to West African Governors, Gambia, 4/73, Gambia Records Office; also Chief Constable E. Canning, Special Branch, Metropolitan Police, to Home Office, 20/12/1939.

53. This may be the conference of coloured peoples referred to by J.R. Hooker, op.cit., in pp. 55-56, in which 'the communists tried to control the proceedings' but were resisted by Padmore who spoke on behalf of the I.A.S.B. and the Sierra Leone Youth League.

54. O.G.R. Williams to Sir Thomas Southorn, Governor of the Gambia, 11/4/1939, 7046/3/39: Gambia 4/73, secret M.P. no. 179, 22/2/38, Gambia Records Office.

Towards the end of 1944 the I.A.S.B. was merged with another Negro body in Manchester whose founders were Dr. P. Milliard and T.R. Makonnen to form the Pan-African Federation. Associated with this new group were the Kikuyu Central Association, the West African Youth League and some other Negro student bodies in Britain, though there was some objection from Negro groups in Cardiff to the aims of the Padmore-Makonnen leadership. The new Pan-African Federation attempted to promote both the humanitarian and political interests of Dr. Milliard with the commercial and publishing schemes of Makonnen. It set up a Pan-African Institute to publish and sell its publications relating to various aspects of the colonial question.⁵⁵ Nationalist groups in some of the British colonies were encouraged to form local branches of the Pan-African Congress Movement - at least one was formed in Bathurst, Gambia. The Pan-African Federation sought:

- (1) To promote the well-being and unity of African peoples and peoples of African descent throughout the world.
- (2) To demand self-determination and independence of African peoples, and other subject races from the domination of powers claiming sovereignty and trusteeship over them.
- (3) To secure equality of civil rights for African peoples and the total abolition of all forms of racial discrimination.
- (4) To strive to co-operate between African peoples and others who share our aspirations.⁵⁶

In meetings and in the pages of the International African Opinion theoretical and organizational questions on the future anti-colonial movement in the colonies were discussed and, more importantly, the

55. See G. Padmore, op.cit., p. 150.

56. Ibid., p. 149.

future policy of the historic Manchester Congress and the Pan-African movement in the late 50's anticipated, when Pan African Federation decided that it would 'take an independent ideological position on the colonial question'. Unlike the early Pan-Africanists the young men of the Padmore school were determined, with the support of their allies, to combine thought with effective agitation to assist the colonial Powers to make Africa 'safe for democracy' too. Already in British West Africa, nationalist leaders were advancing the unanswerable argument that the 1941 Atlantic Charter be applied to the colonies in the form of responsible self-government - a demand that became more and more difficult to ignore as the 40's drew to a close.

1. Ali A. Mazrui: Towards a Pan-Africanism: A Study of the Ambition (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), pp. 105-106.
2. K.M. Panikkar: Asia And Western Civilization: A Study of the Vasco Da Gama Book of Asian History, 1497-1500, London, Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957.
3. See his letters to F.A. Bailey and Nancy Cunard, quoted in James R. Hickey, op.cit., pp. 25-26.
4. See The Atlantic Charter and British Empire (L.N.O., 1941), issued by the E.C.F.C. See also The Atlantic Charter and Africa From An American Standpoint by Samuel Hays in Foreign Affairs and Peace Atlas (N.Y., 1941).

CHAPTER IX

THE MANCHESTER CONGRESS AND REVIVAL OF THE PAN-WEST AFRICAN IDEA

It was gradually becoming clear, as the war entered its third year and as colonial peoples were called upon to contribute more in men and materials to the defence of the British Empire, that the result of participation in such global conflict would be the sharpening of African race-consciousness and encouragement of demands for a re-assessment of the old doctrine of Pax Britannica.¹ Side by side with this self-discovery went a certain ambivalence perhaps 'neutralism' towards Europe and its civilisation. The fall of Singapore in 1942, usually compared to the fall of Constantinople, signified the end of European hegemony in Asia and ushered in a new era of nationalism and revolution whose effects have survived to the present day.² To Padmore, the fall of Britain's Eastern fortress was largely the retribution against an unimaginative imperialism which resolutely denied liberty and equality to its colonial subjects.³ 1942 also witnessed the 'Quit India' movement in India, as well as growing demands from British West Africa that the Four Freedoms set forth in the Atlantic Charter must also apply to them.⁴ Their

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1. Ali A. Mazrui: Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1967), pp. 161-162.
 2. K.M. Panikkar: Asia And Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945 (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953).
 3. See his letters to F.A. Ridley and Nancy Cunard, quoted in James R. Hooker, op.cit., pp. 65-66.
 4. See The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa (1943), memorandum issued by the N.C.N.C. See also The Atlantic Charter and Africa From An American Standpoint by the Committee on Africa, The War, and Peace Aims (N.Y., 1942).

demands were ignored, and it was made quite clear to them that as far as Africa was concerned the Atlantic Charter did not apply. WASU took up the question again in its summer conference in 1942. which, among other things, demanded immediate self-government and independence within five years.⁵ In America too, Nkrumah and the African Students Association of North America were assisting between 1942 and 1944 various American Committees on Africa, on the subject of the Atlantic Charter and African self-government.

Late in 1944 the I.A.S.B. was merged into the Pan-African Federation, the body which was responsible for planning the next Pan-African conclave. A few months later the World Trade Union Conference, summoned by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress since 1943 and postponed from June 1944, met in London on February 5th, 1945. At that conference the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) was established in opposition to the older International Federation of Trade Unions (I.F.T.U.).⁶ Although the conference was mostly concerned with European trade union politics and with post-war European issues, colonial trade unionists were also invited. Those who attended and raised questions on colonial matters included Wallace-Johnson (Sierra Leone), E.F. Small and I.M. Garba-Jahumpa (Gambia), J. Annan (Gold Coast), Bankole Timothy (Nigeria), S.A. Dange (leader of the All-India Trade Union Congress delegation). The conference resolved "to bring to an end the system of colonies...." and to lay the foundations "of a world order in which

5. For details of this conference see W.A.S.U. Magazine, May, 1943: 'Conference on West African Problems'.

6. Arthur Horner: "The World Trade Union Conference". Labour Monthly, vol. XXVII, Jan.-Dec. 1945, pp. 41-46.

non-self-governing communities and nations can attain the status of free nations...."⁷ At the end of the conference, Padmore took the opportunity to invite the colonial delegates to Manchester to discuss the possibility of a Pan-African Congress that September. In April the Pan-African Federation, in co-operation with Dr. Moody's League of Coloured Peoples, W.A.S.U., the I.A.S.B., the Negro Welfare Centre (Liverpool and Manchester) and the colonial trades union leaders addressed a Manifesto to the United Nations conference at San Francisco. The Manifesto reminded the Great Powers of their adherence to the Atlantic Charter, recommended economic and social development of Africa through the agencies of the United Nations and African participation in such development, "full self-government within a definite time limit" and the eradication of mass illiteracy. The Manifesto, signed by Padmore, Moody, J.S. Annan, H.N. Critchlow (British Guiana Trade Unions), Garba-Jahumpa, K.A. Korsah and R.W. Beoku-Betts, included a passage which made it clear that for the Africans self-determination and racial equality were as important as, if not more important than, the preservation of peace:

United Nations must free themselves of the evils against which they are fighting (italics).

Africa is a land of varied political forms, economic interests and social and cultural standards. This is complicated by the fact that among the powers with imperial possessions in Africa are fascist Spain and fascist Portugal. It is further complicated by the colour-bar laws and practices obtaining within the territories of some of the

7. Ibid., report by S.A. Dange, leader of All-India Trade Union Congress delegation, pp. 75-76. For a critical assessment of the political role of trade unions in colonial and post colonial politics see Carl G. Roseberg, Jr. and James S. Coleman ed. Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa (University of California Press, 1964), pp. 340-381.

United Nations themselves, notably the Union of South Africa. The United Nations are pledged to secure in addition to the military defeat of fascism, the eradication of its moral and political manifestations, chief of which is the theory of the master-race against inferior races. If the principles for which we fight do not apply to Europe, then it is the duty of the United Nations to eliminate the influence of the Spanish and Portuguese fascist regimes and to remove from their own territories those theories and practices for the destruction of which Africans have died on many battlefields....

The present inferior political, economic and social status of the African peoples militates against the achievement of harmonious co-operation among the peoples of the world. International co-operation demands the abolition of every kind of discrimination on account of colour, race and creed wherever such discrimination exists.⁸

Between June and August 1945 various meetings of coloured organisations were organised by the L.C.P. and the Pan-African Federation, and at one of these meetings held on 12th August the groundwork for the projected Pan-African Congress was prepared under the chairmanship of Dr. Milliard. The same period also witnessed the active participation of F.K. Nkrumah, newly arrived from America, in the affairs of the Pan-African Federation and W.A.S.U., and the beginning of Nkrumah's career as a Pan-African radical and revolutionary nationalist. October was agreed upon as the month in which the Congress would be held, invitations were sent to trade unions, nationalist groups and other organisations in the colonies, and it was expected that the colonial trade union leaders who were attending the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) conference in Paris that October, would be able to come to Manchester for the Congress.⁹ Du Bois was fully informed about the plans, but

8. "Africa in the Post-War World". 'Manifesto For Presentation to the United Nations Conference, San Francisco, April, 1945', reprinted in Labour Monthly, vol. XXVII, Jan.-Dec. 1945, pp. 154-156. For full text see Appendix II.

9. W.A.S.U. proposed that the 1945 Congress be held on African soil, preferably Liberia; practical considerations, however, ruled out the idea.

it seems that the bulk of the organisation was done by Padmore and the inner circle of the Pan-African group which now included Nkrumah.

In the colonies, the trade unions whose formation the imperial government had encouraged during and after the war formed, in addition to local organisations, the nucleus of the local pan-African committees. In some cases as in the Gold Coast, older organisations like the A.R.P.S. appointed their delegates to the Pan-African Congress. In the Gambia the local committee of the Pan-African Congress was formed in September 1945 'to make the necessary arrangements for the forthcoming Pan-African Congress' and to send a delegation from the Gambia.¹⁰ Councillor Garba-Jahumpa and Mr. Downes Thomas were the delegates-designate, and application for Government to pay their air passages to London for the Congress was approved.¹¹ Members of the committee included Mr. R.C. Valentine (chairman), C. Downes Thomas (secretary), I.M. Garba-Jahumpa (joint-secretary), Mrs. Hannah Mahoney, Mrs. Judith Mensah, Mrs. Hanna Sagnia; Mr. Finden Dailey (journalist), J. Francis Senegal, E. Lloyd-Evans, O.B. Jallow (an N.C.B.W.A. activist in the 1920s), M.D. Faal, Baseru Jagne, Salieu Foon and Iderisa Samba. Trouble, however, soon developed over the representative character of the delegates appointed to the Manchester Congress. Another faction led

10. Downes Thomas, Hon. Secretary of the Gambia Pan-African Congress committee to Miss H.M. Burness, 24/9/1945, Gambia Confidential S. 3008, 25/9/45: "Pan-African Congress".

11. Ibid., the Gambia Government must have been the only colonial government to pay the passages of delegates to an anti-colonial Pan-African Congress. Its information on the Congress and the Pan-African Federation indicates an unawareness of the post-war anti-colonial mood. Even in Britain this historic Congress was hardly noticed by the press.

by Mr. A. M'Bye an influential trader, calling itself the General Assembly of Loyal Citizens, protested, under the auspices of the Joint Trade Unions Council against 'the unprecedented and undemocratic steps adopted by a Committee of Gentlemen in sponsoring the delegation of Messrs. C.W. Downs-Thomas and I. Garba-Jahumpa.... We uphold that they do not represent this ancient colony'.¹² The Government, however, was of the opinion that as far as they were aware, these delegates were the 'accredited representatives of the local committee', and that having no information about the Pan-African Congress, they advised the General Assembly of Loyal Citizens to address their protest to the Pan-African Federation in London.¹³ By this time the chairman of the Pan-African local committee which originally selected the delegates, had gone over to Mr. M'Bye's General Assembly and had asked Mr. E.F. Small, who was representing the Gambia at the W.T.U.C. in Paris, to be Gambia's delegate to the Manchester Congress.¹⁴ On the same day another body calling itself the 'Peoples' Party', convened a mass meeting which re-affirmed its confidence in the original delegates¹⁵ who, in fact, did attend the Congress. Mr. Downes Thomas reported back on the Congress, describing it as 'a new girdle put round the world for closer understanding between all men and nations of goodwill and the peoples of African

12. Ibid., A. M'Bye, J.P., Chairman, to Public Relations Officer, Gambia, 10/10/1945.

13. Ibid., minute to, 13/10/1945.

14. Ibid., R.C. Valantine to E.F. Small, 13/10/1945.

15. Ibid., R.S. Rendall and others to the Colonial Secretary, 13/10/1945.

descent. We are at the beginning of a new era... We have a real identity of interest and a tremendous awakening has brought us all here.¹⁶

In the Gold Coast the Pan-African Congress found a supporter in W.E.G. Sekyi who had had contacts with Padmore in the 30s. Sekyi was then president of the G.C.A.R.P.S., and in September he wrote to G. Ashie-Nikoi, who was then in London with the Gold Coast delegation, asking him to represent the Gold Coast A.R.P.S. at the Manchester congress. Nikoi accepted the offer after consulting Nkrumah, Regional Secretary of the Pan-African Federation, and Padmore. Forwarding a copy of the Pan-African memo to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Nikoi shrewdly observed that "There appears to be little difference between the Conservatives and Labourites in so far as Colonial Policy is concerned. The present position financial position (sic) of this country leaves very much to be desired and it is a miracle that can save the situation. This is the time that we must press for changes".¹⁷ Sekyi replied that a conference of the G.C.A.R.P.S. had confirmed his appointment of Ashie-Nikoi to represent the Society at the Manchester Congress, and that £100 had been collected for his expenses, to be supplemented when necessary. The G.C.A.R.P.S. Executive Committee had also drafted instructions to Mr. Nikoi:

16. Gambia News Bulletin, 16/10/1945; Downes Thomas' other reports on the Congress are contained in the issues for 17/10/45 and 22/10/45.

17. G. Ashie-Nikoi to W.E.G. Sekyi, 27/9/1945: G.C.A.R.P.S. files, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana, File No. 100, 187/65 'Pan-African Congress'. Padmore seems to have held the same view expressed by Ashie-Nikoi: see J.R. Hooker, *op.cit.*, p.88 and G. Padmore: Pan-Africanism or Communism?, pp. 156-158.

First, to base your representations on Society's 1934 Petition to King in Council and 1935 Petition to House of Commons.... State that since establishment of Provincial Councils Government has passed all opposed legislation with more than usual disregard of public protests. Urge necessity for establishing Pan-African Council with offices in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Moscow and Delhi with central Press in London. Secondly, with reference to discussion concerning abolition of Crown Colony Rule, to emphasise following important facts: One that Africa was self-governing before Europe's intrusion. Two that self-government need not take a British shape. Three that Democracy is not a British invention. Four that Gold Coast forms of Democracy are being forced by legislation in strange and unsuitable moulds designed by Nigerian officials to facilitate ascendancy of white officials and black assistants and to humiliate and thwart respectable patriotic progressive indigenes. Northern Nigerian and Northern Territory political ideas being held out as models for imitation by Gold Coast Chiefs, thus holding out medieval autocracies as substitutes for Democratic Gold Coast Institutions. Thirdly, to demand that until legislative power and control of colonial revenue are completely in aboriginal hands there shall be no officially planned or controlled University or University College but that capable students with means or under scholarships be freely permitted as was the practice till recently, to travel and complete their education in European or American Universities.... Restriction on admission at European Educational Institutions of non-European students on plea of limited accommodation to be kept within reasonable bounds. Fourthly, concerning Trade, to base your representations on programme of Farmer's Committee which Society heartily endorses. Insist on removal of all trade restrictions and restoration of former trade conditions whereunder Africans did establish considerable trading houses. Wherefore better banking facilities required to neutralise sinister influence of local Banks on African commercial and industrial enterprise. Lastly to advocate that Pan-African Council, if established, shall make it part of its policy to expose and prevent evils issuing from persistent attempts officially made to prevent indigenes from enjoying full benefit of British advance in development of civil and criminal Procedure Codes with barbarous innovations designed to render Defence difficult and also to trip up independent-minded indigenes.¹⁸

Sekyi's instructions nowhere mention the interests of the common people, and the wishes of the Gold Coast middle class nationalists, as expressed in the instructions, are almost identical to the legal,

18. Ibid., Sekyi, President of G.C.A.R.P.S. to Ashie-Nikoi, undated.

political and economic demands of the N.C.B.W.A. of the 20s. One wonders what the revolutionary Nkrumah thought of this type of nationalist politics. Very soon, the question of leadership and the locus of power would have to be resolved and would fundamentally affect the pattern of Gold Coast politics in the ensuing decades.¹⁹

The Congress²⁰ was held at the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, from October 15th to October 19th, and opened with an address of welcome by Alderman W.P. Jackson, the Lord Mayor of Manchester. A hundred delegates represented organisations in Africa, the West Indies and Great Britain. Du Bois, representing the N.A.A.C.P. was nominated permanent chairman of the Congress. The two sessions of October 16th dealt with North West Africa and South Africa, the main speakers being Nkrumah, Ashie Nikoi, Chief Soyemi Coker (Nigeria), F.O.B. Blaize (W.A.S.U.), Marko Blubi (South Africa) and Peter Abrahams (South Africa). Ashie Nikoi, who represented the West African Cocoa Farmers' Delegation and the G.C.A.R.P.S. laid all the troubles of West Africa at the door of British imperialism, lamented the creation of the Provincial Councils set up by the 1925 constitution dismissing them as 'nothing short of Government Departments controlled by political officers', and concluded that

19. Looking back on the Congress, Nkrumah observed that it 'shot into the limbo the gradualist aspirations of our African middle classes and intellectuals and expressed the solid down-to-earth will of our workers, trade unionists, farmers and peasants who were decisively represented at Manchester, for independence', K. Nkrumah quoted in J.R. Hooker, op.cit., p. 95.

20. For details of the proceedings of the Manchester Congress see History of the Pan-African Congress, ed. G. Padmore (Hammersmith Bookshop Ltd., London, 1963), pp.27-74.

he had come 'to ask this Congress to see that West Africa gets its political emancipation. It is our right and we must have it.... We do not want freedom that is partially controlled - we want nothing but freedom'. C. Downes-Thomas (Gambia) condemned colonial rule as outmoded, undemocratic and unprogressive, and argued that political independence was the basis of economic independence. French and Belgian Africa found their spokesman in the Togolese poet Dr. Raphael Armattoe, author of The Golden Age of West African Civilization. Dr. Armattoe briefly described French colonial philosophy and raised a moot point when he observed that 'It is sometimes questioned whether French West Africans have any feeling of national consciousness, but I can say that French West Africans would be happier if they were governing themselves. They sometimes envy the British Africans their intense national feeling - oppression has bound them together. A French West African should feel that he is an African first, before he is anything else.' Delegates representing Kenya, Trinidad, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Grenada, British Guiana and Barbados spoke during the sessions of October 17th and 18th, with both Garba-Jahumpa and J.F. Rojas (Trinidad Socialist Party and T.U.C.) emphasising the unifying role of the Congress. Du Bois then reported on the race issue in America, and although he agreed on the necessity of self-government for Africans, he warned the militants that such forms of government demanded experience and practice: 'A great many of us want to say that we can govern ourselves now and govern ourselves well; that may not be true. Government is a matter of experience and long experience. Any people

who have been deprived of self-government for a long time and then have it returned to them are liable to make mistakes. That is only human, and we are saying we have a right to make mistakes as that is how people learn, so we are asserting that we must have self-government even if we make mistakes.' It was precisely the same argument Nkrumah was to use against the view that Africans were not prepared for self-government.²¹

The Congress, which tended to be dominated by West African questions, passed various resolutions on political and economic questions relating to West Africa, the Congo and North Africa, East Africa, South Africa, the High Commission Territories, South-West Africa, the West Indies, Ethiopia, Liberia and Haiti, and race relations in Britain. Most of the constitutional and economic points listed in Sekyi's instructions to Ashie Nikoi were included in the resolutions on West Africa, with Nkrumah adding the Pan-African argument that 'the artificial divisions and territorial boundaries created by the imperialist powers are deliberate steps to obstruct the political unity of the West African peoples'.²² The Congress' Declaration to the Colonial Powers, written by Du Bois, affirmed its belief in peace and in the principles of the Atlantic Charter, but warned that 'as a last resort' force might be used in the struggle for independence. It emphasised the importance of organisation and the active participation of the intellectuals in the mass movement for colonial freedom. Its 'Declaration to the

21. Ali A. Mazrui: "Consent, Colonialism and Sovereignty", Political Studies, 1963, vol. II, pp. 50-51.

22. History of the Pan-African Congress, para e, p. 55.

Colonial Peoples of the World', which was written by Nkrumah, also re-affirmed the right of all people to self-determination:

We believe in the rights of all peoples to govern themselves. We affirm the right of all colonial peoples to control their own destiny. All colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic. The peoples of the colonies must have the right to elect their own government, a government without restrictions from a foreign power

The object of the imperialist powers is to exploit. By granting the right to the colonial peoples to govern themselves, they are defeating that objective. Therefore, the struggle for political power by colonial and subject peoples is the first step towards, and the necessary pre-requisite to, complete social, economic and political emancipation.

The Fifth Pan-African Congress, therefore, calls on the workers and farmers of the colonies to organize effectively. Colonial workers must be in the front lines of the battle against imperialism.

This Fifth Pan-African Congress calls on the intellectuals and professional classes of the colonies to awaken to their responsibilities. The long, long night is over.... Today there is only one road to effective action - the organization of the masses.

COLONIAL AND SUBJECT PEOPLES OF THE WORLD - UNITE!²³

In general the Manchester Congress was seen as the zenith of the Pan-African movement.²⁴ To Nkrumah, the Congress was particularly important because 'it was quite distinct and different in tone, outlook and ideology from the four that had preceded it'. Former Pan-African congresses were reformist and middle class but the 1945 congress was more broadly based and radical in its nationalism. Above all, 'the main reason why it achieved so much

23. K. Nkrumah: Towards Colonial Freedom (Heinemann, 1962), Appendix, pp. 44-45.

24. "1945 must be regarded as an important year as it witnessed the attainment of the greatest height in Pan-Africanism." Interview with the Hon. I.M. Barba-Jahumpa, Member of the Gambia House of Representatives, 17/11/66.

was because for the first time the delegates who attended it were practical men and men of action and not, as was the case of the four previous conferences, merely idealists contenting themselves with writing theses but quite unwilling to take any active part in dealing with the African problem.... it was this Fifth Pan-African Congress that provided the outlet for African nationalism and brought about the awakening of African political consciousness. It became in fact, a mass movement of Africa for the Africans.²⁵ Indirectly too, and almost as if by chance, the Congress served to revive the N.C.B.W.A. idea²⁶ - an idea that had been dormant since 1930. It also rekindled Nkrumah's old scheme of West African unity,²⁷ the first step towards which was the creation on December 15th, 1945 of the West African National Secretariat by Nkrumah and radical companions like Bankole-Akpata, Kojo Botsio, Ashie Nikoi and Awooner Renner, to act as a co-ordinating centre for nationalist movements in West Africa. The W.A.N.S. idea was radical, populist and socialistic; in fact one of its officers in a booklet entitled West African Soviet Union advocated a Soviet-style approach to the problem of ethnic groups in West Africa.

In West Africa too, a more moderate group of middle class

25. K. Nkrumah: Autobiography, pp. 53-54.

26. "For West Africa it i.e. the 1945 Congress marked the revival of the idea of the West African National Congress of the early 1920." Interview with the Hon. I.M. Garba-Jahumpa, 17/11/66.

27. Nkrumah had preached the idea of West African unity since his student days in America, Autobiography, pp. 43-44.

nationalists had also drawn some inspiration from the 1945 Congress. In the Gold Coast, the Accra intelligentsia led by Dr. F.V. Nanka-Bruce, the Hon. G.E. Moore, the Hon. Akilagpa Sawyerr, K.B. Ateko, W.E.G. Sekyi, J.B. Danquah and A.M. Akiwumi met at the Rodger Club on 18th December 1945 to revive the N.C.B.W.A.²⁸ At the meeting it was decided to revive the N.C.B.W.A. in the renewed attack on the Provincial Councils; Sekyi and Awoonor Williams were requested to organise the Central and Western Province branches respectively.²⁹ The Accra meeting resolved

That WHEREAS the National Congress of British West Africa was formed in 1920 with Branches in the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, with the object of championing the rights and liberties of the peoples of those territories, and

WHEREAS the Gold Coast Branch of the Congress has ceased to exist for some considerable time and it is now desirable that that Branch be resuscitated.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the said Gold Coast Branch of the National Congress of British West Africa be resuscitated forthwith.....³⁰

The enthusiasm, however, did not last and organisation was poor, and by July 1946 this predecessor of the U.G.C.C. sank into oblivion.³¹

The groups which revived the N.C.B.W.A., however, were different in political outlook from Nkrumah's W.A.N.S. group. The former group was reformist, legalistic and élitist, seeing itself as the natural successor of the black Edwardians of the N.C.B.W.A. days

28. N.C.B.W.A. (Gold Coast Branch) circular by Enoch Mensah and G.J.C. Peregrine Peters, 12/12/1945. Kobina Sekyi Papers, Cape Coast, Ghana.

29. Ibid., Joint Secretary to W.E.G. Sekyi, 31/12/1945.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., Awoonor Williams to W.E.G. Sekyi, 26/7/1946. Ibid., Awoonor Williams to Enoch Mensah, 26/7/1946.

and as potential heir to the colonial régime. Nkrumah on the other hand thought in terms of mass politics, socialism, boycotts and strikes as the quickest means of seizing power. From the point of view of the colonial élite, then, Nkrumah as we shall see, was regarded as an impostor and as a disruptive force. Nkrumah's tendency therefore, to see himself as a more radical image of West African patriots like Casely Hayford and W.A.N.S. as merely a revolutionary version of the N.C.B.W.A. seems understandable. It was an interesting combination of political messianism and political ambition - in fact, it was the beginning of a powerful myth in the history of Pan-African politics.³²

(II)

WEST AFRICAN NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

The West African National Secretariat, formed in December 1945, was intended to serve as a co-ordinating body for nationalist movements in West Africa and as a regional organisation of the Pan-African Federation. According to Peter Abrahams, however, it was the deliberate creation of Nkrumah and other militants such as

32. Professor J.R. Hooker seems to underestimate this aspect of political messianism when he criticises Padmore's coverage of Nkrumah's 1951 electoral victory as 'a review of modern Gold Coast history in the Whig tradition of historiography: all was but a prelude to the advent of Nkrumah and the good times. Nkrumah's West African National Secretariat was linked to the original West African National Congress, despite a seventeen-year hiatus, and Gold Coast progress was made a function of Nkrumah's career....' op.cit., p. 115.

Wallace Johnson designed to seize power as quickly as possible:

"He (Nkrumah) was one of the members of the inner circle of the Pan-African movement until he broke away to found his own West African National Secretariat. I thought then, and still think, that he was the most practical politician of the lot of us. We were concerned with ideas, with the enunciation of great principles. He was concerned with one thing only, getting power and getting it quickly..."³³

For Nkrumah and the 'Young Turks', the only road to power lay in the organisation of the masses, and the W.A.N.S. was designed to facilitate such organisation. Its secretary-general was Nkrumah and Wallace Johnson was chairman; other officials were Bankole Awoonor Renner, Mrs. Renner and Ashie Nikoi. It aimed

1. To maintain contact with, co-ordinate, educate and supply general information on current matters to the various political bodies, trade unions, co-operative societies, farmers organisations, educational, cultural and other progressive societies in West Africa with a view to realising an all-West African National Front for a United West African National Independence.

2. To serve as a clearing house for information on matters affecting the destiny of West Africa in particular and Africa in general; and to educate the peoples and the working classes in particular, of the imperialist countries concerning the problems of West Africa.

3. To foster the spirit of national unity and solidarity among the various territories of West Africa for the purpose of combating the menace of artificial territorial divisions now in existence.

4. To work for unity and harmony among all Africans who stand against imperialism and all forms of exploitation.

5. To engineer the formation of an ALL-WEST AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

Their goal was 'national unity and absolute independence for all West Africa'. They went on to declare that 'Principles alone, when

33. Peter Abrahams: 'Last Word on Nkrumah', West African Review, vol. XXV, 1954, p. 913.

diffused among a people, manifest their right to freedom and liberty. The test of faith is action, and thought and action represent an integral concept of man's struggle for freedom. The economic and political ideas and aspirations scattered among the West African peoples but lacking in co-ordination need to be reduced to a system for a united action.... WEST AFRICA IS ONE COUNTRY: PEOPLES OF WEST AFRICA UNITE!'³⁴ This last section is a good example of the use of Marxist-Leninist concepts employed in the theory of colonial revolution; particularly interesting is the overwhelming emphasis on mass organisation and the intimate connection between theory or ideology and 'praxis'. The radicalisation and politicisation of the masses was obviously a novel doctrine whose significance dawned on the bourgeois nationalists when it was too late, for by then the balance of political forces had shifted in favour of the organisation men.

Nkrumah probably had no plan in 1946 as to the details of a future nationalist organisation in West Africa along the lines laid down at Manchester and he certainly was out of touch with political trends in the Gold Coast.³⁵ In late January 1946 he wrote to Sekyi informing him that his instructions to Ashie Nikoi were the inspiration for the formation of the W.A.N.S. He explained the purpose of the W.A.N.S. and asked for photographs of Gold Coast public figures like Sekyi and Moore, a copy of the G.C.A.R.P.S. 1934 House of Commons petition and articles for publication in a projected

34. 'Bye Laws and Aims and Objects of the West African National Secretariat'; copy found in Kobina Sekyi Papers, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana.

35. K. Nkrumah, Autobiography, pp. 61-62.

W.A.N.S. pamphlet series on West African affairs. Sekyi was also asked to become chairman of the governing council of the W.A.N.S. which Nkrumah and his colleagues were planning to establish.³⁶ Nkrumah wrote again, forwarding W.A.N.S. literature and requesting Sekyi to contribute articles to the New African, the proposed organ of the W.A.N.S.³⁷ Sekyi was later asked to write a special article on the Sedition Bill in the Gold Coast and to advise on the drawing up of bye-laws for W.A.N.S. and on other administrative questions relating to "the successful working of the Secretariat".³⁸ The New African was indeed published in March 1946 as promised by Nkrumah, as the official organ of the W.A.N.S. and as a monthly paper dealing with colonial and African affairs, with its motto: "For Unity and Absolute Independence". Sekyi, however, replied that apart from pressure of work, ill health had compelled him to do very little by way of agitation and other political activity; moreover, he lamented, "it is not easy to get things done in this country, and the younger men are not at all helpful; I suggest that for the time being my active assistance be not too much counted upon." However, he promised to send Nkrumah some suggestions after discussing them with the G.C.A.R.P.S. Executive Committee: he also forwarded a subscription to the new journal.³⁹

The first issue of The New African lost no time in sounding the first blast of the Pan-African trumpet against the monstrous colonial

36. F.N. Nkrumah to W.E.G. Sekyi, 28/1/1946, G.C.A.R.P.S. files, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana. File No. 24, 111/65, 'West African National Secretariat'.

37. Ibid., F.N. Nkrumah to Sekyi, 12/2/1946.

38. Ibid., F.N. Kwame Nkrumah to Sekyi, 21/2/1946.

39. Ibid., Sekyi to Nkrumah, 13/3/1946.

régimes:

Behind six years of world destruction, and six months of poker playing with the small Powers, and the Colonies as "the jackpot", it should be plain to the working classes of the world, whatever their colour, that there is only one freedom worth having, and that is, freedom to manage their own affairs. The peoples of the colonies are being taken for a ride, not on a tiger, but on a more dangerous beast, an old, hungry and decrepit lion, suffering from the illusion that the world is still a jungle of which he is King. Power politics suggest that the world is indeed a jungle, but the Lion is no longer the King. In order to save themselves the peoples of the Colonies seem now to be up against a clear-cut proposition. Either they dismount from the lion, and manage their own affairs in their own way, or they will be faced with a future even more catastrophic than their ordeals of the past thirty years....⁴⁰

The New African also reiterated the aims of the W.A.N.S.: "In order for a people to act politically there must be a political concept. Such a concept must be concretised by means of a united national front organisation. The mission of the West African National Secretariat, therefore, is to maintain, sustain and push forward the national struggle for West African National Unity and Absolute Independence..."

Its 'Credo' read:

We Believe

(1) That Imperialism and colonial liberation are two irreconcilable opposites; a compromise between them is impossible. The death of the one is the life of the other.

(2) That without political independence the talk of economic independence is mere waste of time. It stood for the 'complete liquidation of the colonial system', independence for all West Africa and the industrialisation of West Africa. It opposed 'Any form of reactionary nationalism in West Africa; any form of opportunism and reformism in matters affecting the political and economic destiny of West Africa', and it called upon all individuals and organisation in Africa "to join The West African National Secretariat and to rally the fullest support behind the Secretariat's movement for African unity and freedom", adding: "The day when West Africa, as one united

40. The New African, vol. 1, no. 1, March, 1946.

country, pulls itself from imperialist oppression and exploitation it will pull the rest of Africa with her... The time of politics of words is gone; this is an age of politics of action. Act now!"⁴¹

By united West Africa the W.A.N.S. meant British, French, Spanish and Portuguese West Africa, as well as the Belgian Congo and Liberia. Imitating Garvey's U.N.I.A., they took as their slogan "One Aim! One People! One United West Africa!" The Secretary-General fully stated for the first time his theory of territorial independence and regional unity:

In all matters pertaining to the destiny of West Africa, personal and tribal differences, opinions and shortcomings must not be allowed to hamper our struggle for West African National Unity and Absolute independence. The ideals of West African National Unity and independence must hold supreme and paramount place in our thinking and action.... Only in unity and organisation can West Africa find strength, but not in the haphazard unification of dissenting factions. Single factions struggling alone towards the same ends are diverting their energies and may fail. But a unification of these several elements into a concerted effort is a weapon which wields power that cannot be defeated. There is no fortress, however strongly fortified, that a united people cannot overthrow.... The West African National Secretariat shall launch the appeal for the formation of an All-West African National Congress.... PEOPLE OF WEST AFRICA, UNITE.⁴²

Like Casely Hayford and the N.C.B.W.A. leaders in the 1920s, Nkrumah was not very clear about what he meant by West African National Unity, although unlike the former he was quite clear as to what constituted 'the people' and how this united front should be organised. Yet it was not clear whether he wanted an inter-territorial mass party (like the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain) with W.A.N.S. officials as the general staff, or whether he was contemplating a Marxist-Leninist party in alliance with the bourgeois nationalists

⁴¹. Ibid., p. 5.

⁴². Ibid., vol. 1, No. 3, May 1946, p. 2.

but acting as the vanguard - and eventually seizing power in the classic Communist pattern. Or was this, like the General Strike and the classless society, merely another myth designed to whip up more positive response in the colonies? At least, some of his friends who nevertheless disagreed with his approach were willing to see the political prophet in him. It was reported that when Nkrumah spoke of unity and absolute independence at a Fabian Colonial Bureau conference on February 12-14 1946 at Clacton-on-Sea, Dr. Rita Hinden, Secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, referred to his idea as "representing that of the Italian patriot, Mazzini, who preached Italian unity without planning."⁴³

Evidently there were some, both in the Pan-African movement and in West Africa, who not only disagreed with some of Nkrumah's views and methods, but regarded him as an uncertain ally with dangerous political proclivities. Peter Abrahams had already noted Nkrumah's impatience with armchair nationalist theoreticians and his keen appreciation of political power. Such a man would obviously be an inconvenience to the colonial elite. Thus on August 2nd, F. Awoonor Williams, a barrister and local politician at Sekondi, writing to Sekyi in connection with the W.A.N.S. and the colonial policy of the Labour Government observed:

To be quite candid when I saw the name of Wallace Johnson amongst the signatories to the aims and objects i.e. of the W.A.N.S. I recoiled. With my background and antecedents I

43. Ibid., p. 20. Nkrumah later explained, when questioned by the U.G.C.C. that he 'believed in TERRITORIAL BEFORE INTERNATIONAL solidarity', Dennis Austin: Politics in Ghana, 1946-60 (O.U.P., 1964), p. 54. He abandoned the West African unification idea in the early 1960s in favour of an even wider and more problematic conception - an all-Africa union government: see Towards Colonial Freedom, pp. x-xi.

shrink from associating with anyone who is suspected of associating with the Enemies of his country or being in receipt of pay from doubtful sources, although these imputations may be ill founded. A glance at the aims shows that they are laudable but the names of the sponsors condemn it, and if we wish to secure favourable opinion and support from men of position we ruin our case by such association. I for one have always been suspicious of the majority of Labour Leaders whose avowed aim is wealth and political power and soon as they achieve this, send their sons to Oxford and Cambridge and assume the roll (sic) of the gentry. Out with it and tell ignorant demos that you envy the wealth and position of the gentry and would feign have a share of them and be candid with the matter.

In my view the National Congress of British West Africa should drive their own horse and strive to achieve their destiny without these people.⁴⁴

In a similar vein T.R. Makonnen, one of Nkrumah's close associates, wrote to Sekyi in 1949 after the Accra riots and Nkrumah's dismissal from the U.G.C.C. thanking him for the financial contribution of the G.C.A.R.P.S. to the 1945 Congress. Makonnen also referred to some G.C.A.R.P.S. literature Sekyi had sent him, and to a letter from Sekyi, noting that the letter "has helped me greatly in putting the whole matter into perspective and in confirming my own tentative judgment of what is wrong". This was obviously a letter about Gold Coast politics from the point of view of the chiefs and professional classes. Makonnen added:

From what I have gleaned I feel justified in giving my support to the "traditionalists" among whom you count yourself.... Right from the time of the Pan-African Congress, it was obvious to me that Nkrumah was not prepared to play the game, and I am only too aware of the deception on which the Secretariat, and now the Convention, are founded.

I have always felt that if Africa is to adopt Communism as its political philosophy, there is plenty in our own institutions on which to build without giving allegiance to another imperialist group masquerading behind an "ism". I have

44. F. Awoonor Williams to Sekyi, 2/8/1946, G.C.A.R.P.S. files, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana, File No. 24, 111/65.

felt all along that the Aborigines Society should have taken the lead in calling a Constitutional Convention as did John Adams, to meet a declaration of the principle that the sovereign status of the people remains what it has always been. Such a Convention should then act as the spear-head of the peoples wishes.... I am in fact 100% with you in your criticisms of the Convention, and like you feel that these people who have not had time fully to grasp political doctrine are not the best leaders for the Gold Coast. Merely to leave it to history to judge will not help, and I feel that these men should not be allowed to destroy the good work that others have done and are still trying to do.⁴⁵

Yet only two years prior to the foundation of the Convention Peoples Party ('the Widening of the Gap' as Nkrumah later put it) Nkrumah had written a letter to Sekyi full of enthusiasm and admiration for the initiative he had taken with G.E. Moore 'Pa Grant' and J.B. Danquah in laying the foundations of the U.G.C.C.⁴⁶ How did it come about that the 'traditionalists' had lost power to 'these men' and that one of their leading intellectuals was in 1949 calling upon History to stand in judgment over Nkrumah and the C.P.P.? The story has been well told in Dennis Austin's Politics in Ghana and needs no repetition here.

Back in London Nkrumah's W.A.N.S. struggled to keep the short-lived New African going, and supported the W.A.S.U. planned an all-West African conference as early as May 1946. Nkrumah visited Paris to secure the support of Sourou-Migan Apithy, Lamine Guèye, Houphouët-Boigny, Leopold Senghor who were then deputies in the French National Assembly, for the projected conference. The possibility of a movement for the creation of a Union of West African

45. Ibid., T.R. Makonnen to Sekyi; undated letter, probably late 1949.

46. Ibid., F.N. Kwame Nkrumah to Sekyi, 28/5/1947. For the origins of the U.G.C.C. see Dennis Austin, op.cit., p. 52.

Socialist Republics along the lines advocated by the W.A.N.S. was also discussed with the French Africans and the conference, attended by Apithy and Senghor, took place later between August 30 and September 1, 1946 in London. The conference rejected the gradualist approach to self-government, 'endorsed the idea of reviving the West African National Congress' and 'to promote the concept of a West African Federation as an indispensable lever for carrying forward the Pan-African vision of an ultimate United States of Africa'.⁴⁷ W.A.S.U. Magazine reported that the conference had met 'to discuss the present political, economic and social conditions in West Africa, and to determine in that light a plan for creating a united and independent West Africa'. The reporter, probably Nkrumah, observed that the conference was truly all-West African and that its main theme was unity and independence of all West Africa. He defined the pan-West African idea thus:

The West African concept of unity has nothing in common with the geopolitician's and imperialists' vision of world conquest and domination of other peoples. It has nothing in common with any imaginary "African Heartland", so dearly cherished by political marauders and buccaneers. That concept of West African unity is a noble and inspiring idea which asserts that in order to liberate themselves from the shackles of imperialism.... West Africans must organise and weld together in an all-embracing united national front, which will carry forward the struggle for independence. For in such an organic unity lies the most powerful weapon for effective political action. It further asserts that the unity of the West African people derives not merely from the fact of their natural affinity and oneness, but also from the common danger to their ancestral lands, their common need, suffering and anxiety. It maintains that the possession of political power is the key to economic and social progress.... It is axiomatic that a

47. G. Padmore, Pan-Africanism or Communism?, p. 173; c.f. K. Nkrumah, Autobiography, p. 57.

part cannot be greater than the whole; so also with Africa. West Africa cannot be greater than all Africa. The significance and importance, therefore, of the unity and independence of West Africa must be seen in the African context.⁴⁸

The report concluded with the usual argument that nationalist successes in West Africa would be followed by simultaneous agitation for independence in other parts of Africa. Logically and practically the concept of a Pan-West African Marxist-style movement was fraught with difficulties. W.A.N.S. was not territorially based and had no contact with the English-speaking bourgeois nationalists who, in any case, were suspicious of its aims. Moreover, the constitutional changes in the French colonies after 1946 ruled out any hopes of effective co-operation between the W.A.N.S. and the French West African groups.⁴⁹ Whatever the shortcomings of the W.A.N.S. conference it could at least claim to have introduced the Pan-African idea to French-speaking Africa and to have revived a constant theme in West African history.⁵⁰

In 1947 Makonnen's Pan-African Federation started a new journal Pan-Africa, described as a monthly journal of African life, history and thought. Makonnen was publisher and managing director and members of the editorial staff included Dina Stock (executive

48. "The West African Conference And After" (Anon.), WASU Magazine, vol. XII, No. 3, Summer 1947, p. 14.

49. For French West African politics after 1946 see Thomas Hodgkin and Ruth Schachter: French-speaking West Africa in Transition (International Conciliation, May 1960, No. 528).

50. Ibid., p. 431; the unification theme in West African history is argued in detail by A.B. Aderibigbe, "West African Integration: An Historical Perspective" in Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, 1963, vol. 5, No.1. pp. 9-13.

editor) and Florence Nicol (research secretary). The themes were generally concerned with race relations and anti-colonial issues, with contributors from several countries; but articles specifically on West Africa were very few. The P.A.F. also kept a close watch on the affairs of the U.N. Trusteeship Council particularly on matters concerning the British colonies.⁵¹ By 1948 Pan-Africa was declared a seditious publication and was banned by some colonial governments; it ceased publication soon after.

In 1946-47 a small revolutionary cell within W.A.S.U. called 'The Circle' was formed by Nkrumah and a few militants dedicated to radical agitation for self-government and West African unity. This group lapsed with the departure of Nkrumah and Kojo Botsio for the Gold Coast the same year, and a projected all-West African conference was never held. Nkrumah's subsequent political career in the Gold Coast also meant that the pan-West African idea, a central theme of his nationalist philosophy, had to be soft-pedalled until his accession to power in 1951 when it was again revived. As early as December 1953 he anticipated future African conclaves by calling the Sixth Pan-African Congress at Kumasi. 'Pan-African', in fact, was a misnomer as only a few delegates from West Africa attended this little known Congress - Dr. Azikiwe, Mrs. Ransome-Kuti and H.O. Davies representing Nigeria, and Mr. Loyd Whisnant, Liberian

51. See the P.A.F.'s representation to the United Nations Delegations, 22/10/48, G.C.A.R.P.S. Files, Cape Coast Regional Archives, Ghana, 187/65, File No. 100; 'Pan-African Congress'. The letter was a rebuttal of a pro-British speech made by Grantley Adams on behalf of the colonies at the Trusteeship Council in 1948; it accused Adams as 'an apologist for imperialism, and an enemy of the cause....'

consul-general in Accra, representing Liberia. Nkrumah's opponents in the Gold Coast did not attend, nor were the Gambia, Sierra Leone or French West African territories represented.⁵² The Congress was intended to be the forerunner of a Pan-African conference to be held in 1954 to discuss Africa as a whole, especially race and politics.⁵³ It is interesting to note that almost a generation after the N.C.B.W.A. which, among other things, deprecated the "partitioning of African communities", Nkrumah's Kumasi Congress resolved to create a West African federation and a permanent West African National Congress as the basis of "a strong and truly federal state that is capable of protecting its territory from outside invasion...."⁵⁴ Although Nkrumah described the Congress as "the nucleus of great potentialities", the fact remained that this form of anti-colonial alliance politics overlooked certain important facts: the absence of any delegate from Northern Nigeria a country, West Africa rightly argued, "without whose unity a West African federation has no real basis". Gambia's Consultative Committee report referred to the possibility of "federation with other West African territories" but federation was opposed, according to West Africa, by one of her leading politicians, the Hon. Garba-Jahumpa who had been one of the 1945 Pan African Congress delegates. Besides, other political groups in the Gambia were cautious of such federal unions. The Gambia Democratic Party, which was based mainly in the

52. P. Decraene, op.cit., pp. 26-27.

53. West Africa, 11/4/1953, p. 325.

54. Ibid., 19/12/1953, pp. 1177-1178: 'West African Federation'.

capital, argued that self-government must come to the territories individually before federation; and although Point 4 of its policy resolved "To collaborate and work with other British West African Territories with a view of establishing a Dominion of Federated States of British West Africa in the seeable future", it was "feared that tomorrow if British West Africa is allowed to develop separately into splinter Dominions such as the Federation of Nigeria, The Dominion of the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone Territory and The Gambia Territory, it could be argued that whereas British Central Africa (where the Government is mainly manned by Europeans) federation was effected against the wishes of the main body of Africans - in West Africa where the Government is mainly African, The Mother Country has done hardly anything to bring the individual territories together into a federation."⁵⁵ The Democratic Party also suggested exploratory talks on the possibility of a British West African Federation along the Australian pattern, with the West African Inter-Territorial Council as the nucleus, the ratio of representation being 1:2:4:6. It was also proposed that the federal capital could either be Kumasi or somewhere in Nigeria.

Then too, there was the question of the attitude of the French West Africans: how would they view Nkrumah's idea of a united West Africa within the Commonwealth? There was also the question of Togoland and the British Cameroons. Nkrumah recognised these

55. A.E. Cham-Joof, Assistant General Secretary, Gambia Democratic Party, to the Rt. Hon. A. Creech Jones, M.P., Leader of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Delegation to West Africa, 23/3/1956. I am grateful to Mr. Cham-Joof for finding the time to locate this piece of information for me.

obstacles to unity and merely spoke of a "revival" of the ideas of the N.C.B.W.A.⁵⁶ To most outside observers and well-wishers Nkrumah was right in seeing the political significance of the Gold Coast in continental terms, but they were equally agreed that a functional approach was more profitable and realistic than an unlikely political federation of West Africa.⁵⁷ The problem, however, had not by 1954 assumed continental proportions for Nkrumah's approach to Pan-Africanism up to 1962 was regional.⁵⁸ It may be that tactical considerations dictated advocacy of 'unity as alliance'⁵⁹ i.e. regional unity, and that longer-term revolutionary objectives and ambitions in the international sphere led him to believe in 'unity as movement' i.e. continental unity. It may also be that the two approaches to African unity are not mutually exclusive. What is certain is that after Nkrumah's accession to power Pan-Africanism, which had hitherto been dominated by New World Negroes, took a new and decisive turn and has had far-reaching effects on the political relations of the African continent and has, to some extent, made its contribution to the conduct and language of international relations. In retrospect, then, the small gathering at Kumasi in 1953 can be seen as a new phase in the evolution of an idea and as the real beginning of the Pan-African movement in Africa.

56. West Africa, 19/12/1953: "West African Federation", pp.1177-1178.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 1178.

58. K. Nkrumah: Towards Colonial Freedom, pp. x-xi.

59. The phrase is Wallerstein's: see Immanuel Wallerstein: Africa, The Politics of Unity (Pall Mall Press, London, 1968). Ch. VII.

CONCLUSION

Detailed study of the West African aspects of the Pan-African movements to 1945 points to several interesting conclusions. Perhaps the most important point is that contrary to standard accounts, there was not one single Pan-African movement: what emerges is a series of pan-African movements assuming different characteristics in different areas, under different leadership, but loosely united by an ideology of race and colour and by a sense of injustice and inferiority. Nor was this form of racial solidarity confined to English-speaking Negroes, as is frequently asserted. Although there was no rapport between English-speaking and French-speaking West Africans during the 1920's and 1930's, we have already established that such rapport, although tenuous, did exist between radical West African Pan-Negro groups in Paris and the Du Bois and Garvey groups in America during the inter-war years. As is generally known, it was only after the 1945 Manchester Congress that some kind of dialogue was established between English and French-speaking West African nationalists, largely through the efforts of Nkrumah and Padmore.

Another view which has emerged from this study is that the alleged differences between the Du Boisian and Garvey concept of Pan-Africanism seem, on closer examination, to have been minimal. The Garvey concept, however, was more influential in Africa, and its economic ideology more acceptable to conservative nationalists and Pan-Africanists in Africa, especially the West African petite-bourgeoisie of the 1920's. The latter group did not share the political goals of Garveyism, and in fact saw itself as the social

class in Africa most suited to lead a Pan-African movement. The view, therefore, that Negro Americans 'influenced' African nationalism and pan-African ideology needs some modification, particularly when viewed in the light of socio-economic analysis of the West African political leadership in the 1920's and 30's.

The Pan-West African nationalist movement of the 1920's partly reflected the post-war Pan-African movement of Negro Americans but to a greater degree reflected the political and economic interests of the West African bourgeois nationalists. We have seen how their agitation for constitutional reform came to be interwoven with Pan-African ideology and practical economic interests - the interests of the colonial élite which were in fact incompatible with any concept of the 'nation' or the 'people' they might have popularised in the course of their political agitation. The political institutions they demanded were precisely those through which their interests and those of the colonial Power could be accommodated without any fundamental changes in the colonial apparatus. Similarly, the educational and legal reforms they demanded, as well as their criticisms of the monopolies and combines, were directly connected with their own class interests. What therefore appeared to the colonial authorities and to European observers in general as a radical movement of newly awakened people was essentially a moderate, constitutionally-minded movement led by a conservative and relatively privileged section of the colonial populace. Their assumption of the leadership of the Pan-West African movement also points to interesting parallels with the conservative nature of the leadership of other pan-movements such as Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism and Pan-

Turanism. This type of leadership dominated West African colonial politics up to the late 1940's in spite of assertions that there was a radical change in the West African political leadership after 1930. We have attempted to show in chapter V that the latter view is largely incorrect.

We have also briefly dealt with an important and relatively neglected aspect in the development of Pan-Africanism - the impact of the Italo-Ethiopian crisis on Pan-Negro thinking. The reaction of Negro peoples, in retrospect, seems to have given impetus to a later organisation of Pan-Negro ideas and aspirations. It is arguable that the spontaneous reaction of Negro peoples to that crisis is characteristic of African responses to white 'aggression' in Africa to the present day, and has always served as a unifying factor in African opposition to European colonialism.

The extent of Communist interest in Pan-Negro nationalism must also be emphasised: this aspect has hitherto been neglected or minimised by students of the colonial activities of the Comintern. This study has not followed Padmore's account of Comintern involvement with or manipulation of Pan-Negro nationalism, but the conclusion reached, though not final, is similar. The reaction of Pan-Negro organisations, except the splinter group in Paris led by Tiémoho Garan-Kouyaté, was the same as that of several other Negro political organisations: they saw Communism as incompatible with Pan-Negro nationalism: on the other hand, many Pan-African leaders, especially the French-speaking Africans, showed a marked hostility to capitalism. It must be added, however, that among the French

African Pan-Negroists, hostility to Communist influence, was less evident. In fact, under Lamine Senghor's brief leadership, the L.D.R.N. was definitely communist oriented, with Senghor himself advocating the adoption of the manifesto of the French Party and the Comintern theses on the colonies. Evidence from Communist sources also indicates the Comintern's interest in Negro American and South African nationalist movements in the 1920's.

The concluding chapters of the study have briefly examined the origins of the new movement in Africa beginning with Nkrumah's early ideas about regional unification and the recurrence of this theme in the history of nationalism in West Africa. The evolution of Nkrumah's regional approach to Pan-Africanism in the 1940's has been dealt with in view of his shift to a continental approach in 1962, and in view of the apparent triumph of the regional approach in present day Pan-African politics and economic integration.

APPENDIX IThe London Manifesto.

The United States of America, after brutally enslaving millions of black-folk suddenly emancipated them and began their education, but it acted without system or forethought, throwing the freed man on the world penniless and landless, educating them without thoroughness and system and subjecting them the while to lynching, lawlessness, discrimination, insult and slander, such as human beings have seldom endured and survived. To save their own government they enfranchised the Negro and then when danger passed, allowed hundreds of thousands of educated and civilised black folk to be lawlessly disfranchised and subjected to a caste system, and at the same time in 1776, 1812, 1861, 1897, and 1917 they asked and allowed thousands of black men to offer up their lives as a sacrifice to the country which despised them.

France alone of the great colonial powers has sought to place her cultured black citizens on a plane of absolute legal and social equality with her white, and given them representation in her highest legislature. In her colonies she has a wide-spread but still imperfect system of state education. This splendid beginning must be completed by widening the political bases of her native government, by restoring to her indigenes the ownership of the soil, by protecting native labour against the aggression of established capital, and by compelling no man, white or black, to be a soldier unless the country gives him a voice in his own government.

The independence of Abyssinia, Liberia, Haiti and San Domingo is absolutely necessary to any sustained belief of the black folk in the sincerity and honesty of the white. These nations have earned the right to be free, they deserve the recognition of the world. Notwithstanding all their faults and mistakes and the fact that they are in many respects behind the most advanced civilization of the day, nevertheless they compare favourably with the past and even recent history of most European nations and it shames civilization that the Treaty of London practically invited Italy to aggression on Abyssinia and that free America has unjustly and cruelly seized Haiti, murdered her citizens and for a time enslaved her workmen, overthrown her free institutions by force and has so far failed in return to give her a single bit of help, aid or sympathy.

What, then, do those demand who see these evils of the colour line and racial discrimination, and who believe in the divine right of Suppressed and Backward Peoples to learn and aspire and be free?

The Suppressed Races through their thinking leaders are demanding:

1. The recognition of civilised men as civilised despite their race and colour.
2. Local self-government for backward groups, deliberately rising as experience and knowledge grow to complete self-government under the limitations of a self-governed world.
3. Education in self-knowledge, in scientific truth and in industrial technique, undivorced from the art of beauty.

4. Freedom in their own religion and customs and with the right to be non-conformist and different.

5. Co-operation with the rest of the world in government, industry and art on the basis of Justice, Freedom and Peace.

6. The ancient common ownership of the Land and its natural fruits and defence against the unrestrained greed of invested capital.

The world must face two eventualities; either the complete assimilation of Africa with two or three of the great world states, with political, civil and social power and privileges absolutely equal for its black and white citizens, or the rise of a great black African State, founded in Peace and Good Will, based on popular education, natural art and industry and freedom of trade, autonomous and sovereign in its internal policy, but from its beginning a part of a great society of peoples in which it takes its place with others as co-rulers of the world.

In some such words and thoughts as these we seek to express our will and ideal and the end of our untiring effort. To our aid we call all men of the earth who love Justice and Mercy. Out of the depths we have cried unto the deaf and dumb masters of the world, - out of the depths we cry to our own sleeping souls. The answer is written in the stars.

The absolute equality of races, physical, political and social, is the founding stone of World Peace and human advancement. No one denies great differences of gift, capacity and attainment among individuals of all races, but the voice of Science, Religion and practical Politics is one in denying the God-appointed existence of super-races or of races naturally and inevitably and eternally inferior.

That in the vast range of time, one group should in its industrial technique or social organisation or spiritual vision lag a few hundred years behind another or forge fitfully ahead or come to differ decidedly in thought, deed and ideal is proof of the essential richness and variety of human nature, rather than proof of the co-existence of demi-gods and apes in human form. The doctrine of racial equality does not interfere with individual liberty, - rather fulfils it.

And of all the various criteria by which masses of men have in the past been judged and classified that of the color of the skin and texture of the hair is surely the most adventitious and idiotic.

It is the duty of the world to assist in every way the advance of the Backward and Suppressed Groups of mankind. The rise of all men is a menace to no one and is the highest human ideal - it is not an altruistic benevolence, but the one road to world salvation.

For the purpose of raising such peoples to intelligence, self knowledge and self control, their intelligentsia of right ought to be recognised as the natural leaders of their groups.

The insidious and dishonourable propaganda which for selfish ends so distorts and denies facts as to represent the advancement and development of certain races as impossible and undesirable should be met with wide-spread dissemination of the truth; the experiment of making the Negro slave a free citizen in the United States is not a failure; the attempts at autonomous government in Haiti and Liberia are not proofs of the impossibility of self-

government among black men; the experience of Spanish America does not prove that mulatto democracy will not eventually succeed there; the aspirations of Egypt and India are not successfully to be met by sneers at the capacity of darker races.

We who resent the attempt to treat civilised men as uncivilised and who bring in our hearts grievance upon grievance against those who lynch the untried, disfranchise the intelligent, deny self-government to educated men, and insult the helpless, - we complain, - but not simply or primarily for ourselves - more especially for the millions of our fellows, blood of our blood and flesh of our flesh who have not even what we have; the power to complain against monstrous wrong, the power to see and know the source of our oppression.

How far the future advance of mankind will depend on the social contact and physical intermixture of the various strains of human blood is unknown. But the demand for the interpenetration of countries and intermingling of blood has come in modern days from the white race alone and has been imposed on brown and black folks mainly by brute force and fraud; and on top of that the resulting people of mixed race have had to endure innuendo, persecution and insult; and the penetrated countries have been forced into semi-slavery.

If it be proven that absolute world segregation by group, color or historic affinity is the best thing for the future world, let the white-race leave the dark world and the dark races will gladly leave the white. But the proposition is absurd. This is a world of men, - of men whose likenesses far outweigh their differences; who mutually need each other in labour and thought and dream, but who can successfully have each other only on terms of equality, justice and mutual respect. They are the real and only peace-makers who work sincerely and peacefully to this end.

The beginning of Wisdom in inter-racial contact is the establishment of political institutions among suppressed Peoples. The habit of democracy must be made to encircle the earth. Despite the attempt to prove that its practice is the secret and divine Gift of the Few, no habit is more natural and more widely spread among primitive peoples or more easily capable of development among wide masses. Local self-government with a minimum of help and oversight can be established to-morrow in Asia, Africa, America and the Isles of the Sea. It will in many instances need general control and guidance but it will fail only when that guidance seeks ignorantly and consciously its own selfish ends and not the people's liberty and good.

Surely in the 20th century of the Prince of Peace, in the millenium of Buddha and Mahmoud, and in the mightiest age of Human Reason there can be found in the civilised world enough of altruism, learning and benevolence to develop native institutions for the native's good rather than continuing to allow the majority of mankind to be brutalised and enslaved by ignorant and selfish agents of commercial institutions whose one aim is profit and power for the few.

And this brings us to the crux of the matter; it is to the shame of the world that to-day the relations between the main groups of mankind and their mutual estimate and respect is determined chiefly by the degree in which one can subject the other to its service, - enslaving labour, making ignorance compulsory, uprooting ruthlessly religion and custom and destroying government so that the favoured few may luxuriate in the toil of the tortured many. Science, Religion and Philanthropy have

thus been made the slaves of world-commerce and industry, and the bodies, minds and souls of Fiji and Congo are judged almost solely by the quotation on the Bourse.

The day of such world organisation is past and whatever excuse may be made for it in other ages, the 20th century must come to judge men as men and not as merely material and labour.

This great industrial problem which has hitherto been regarded as the domestic problem of the culture lands must be viewed far more broadly if it is ever to revive just settlement. Labour and Capital in England can never solve their problem as long as a similar and vastly greater problem of poverty and injustice marks the relations of the whiter and darker peoples.

It is shameful, irreligious, unscientific and undemocratic that the estimate that half the peoples of the earth put on the other half, depends mainly on their ability to squeeze money out of them.

If we are coming to recognise that the great modern problem is to correct maladjustment in the distribution of wealth, it must be remembered that the basic maladjustment is in the outrageously unjust distribution of world income between the dominant and suppressed peoples, - in the rape of land and raw material, the monopoly of technique and culture.

And in this crime, white labour is particeps criminis with white capital.

Unconsciously and consciously, carelessly and deliberately the vast power of the white labour vote in modern democracies has been cajoled and flattered into imperialistic schemes to enslave and debauch black, brown and yellow labour and, with fatal retribution, are themselves to-day bound and gagged and rendered impotent by the resulting monopoly of the world's raw material in the hands of a dominant, cruel and irresponsible few.

And too just as curiously, the educated and cultured of the world, - the wellborn and well-bred, and even the deeply pious and philanthropic receive their education and comfort and luxury, the ministrations of delicate beauty and sensibility on condition that they neither inquire into the real sources of their income or the methods of the distribution, or interfere with the legal props which rest on a pitiful human foundation of writhing white, yellow and brown and black bodies.

We claim no perfectness of our own nor do we seek to escape the blame which of right falls on the Backward for failure to advance, but noblesse oblige, and we arraign civilisation, and more especially the colonial powers for deliberate transgression of our just demands and their own better conscience.

England with all her Pax Britannica, her courts of justice, established commerce and a certain apparent recognition of native law and customs has nevertheless systematically fostered ignorance among the natives, has enslaved them and is still enslaving some of them, has usually declined even to try to train black and brown men in real self-government, to recognise civilised black folk as civilised, or to grant to coloured colonies those rights of self-government which it freely gives to white men.

Belgium as a nation has but recently assumed responsibility for her colonies, and has taken steps to lift them from the worse abuses of the autocratic regime; but

she has not as yet instituted any adequate system of state education, she has not confirmed to the people the possession of their land and labour, and she shows no disposition to allow the natives any voice in their own government or to provide for their political future. Her colonial policy is still mainly dominated by the banks and great corporations who are determined to exploit Congo rather than civilise it.

Portugal and Spain have never drawn a caste line against persons of culture who happen to be of Negro descent. Portugal has a humane code for the natives and has begun their education in some quarters. But unfortunately the industrial concessions of Portuguese Africa are almost wholly in the hands of foreigners whom Portugal cannot or will not control and who are exploiting Land and Labour and re-establishing the African slave trade.

Uganda, Gold Coast Trade Unions.
T.A. Bankole, President, Nigerian T.U.C.
H.W. Clitchlow, British Sahara Trade Unions.
J.A. Garba-Jahumpa, Secretary, Senegal T.U.C.

The decisions of the historic Crimea Conference represent the consolidation of the alliance of the three great powers, Great Britain, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the final phase of the war of liberation against Hitlerite Germany. They demonstrate the unity and singleness of purpose of the anti-fascist powers to "destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world." The decisions aim also at the prevention of any future aggression and at the removal of the political, economic and social causes of war with the aim of continuing collaboration of all peace-loving peoples.

By their Declaration the leaders of the three Governments have reaffirmed their faith in the principles of the Atlantic Charter, their pledge in the Declaration by the United Nations and their determination to build in co-operation with other peace-loving nations a world order dedicated to a secure and lasting peace which will "afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

APPENDIX IIManifesto for Presentation to the United Nations Conference, San Francisco, April, 1945.

Promulgated and supported by The League of Coloured Peoples in co-operation with West African Students' Union (London), International African Service Bureau (London), Negro Association (Manchester), Negro Welfare Centre (Liverpool, and Manchester), Coloured Men's Institute (East London), and endorsed by the following Colonial Trades Union Leaders on behalf of their unions:

J.S. Annan, Gold Coast Trade Unions.
 T.A. Bankole, President, Nigerian T.U.C.
 H.N. Critchlow, British Guiana Trade Unions.
 J.A. Garba-Jahumpa, Secretary, Gambia T.U.C.

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The dawn of a new epoch in world relations is thus breaking. Only on the basis of the unity of purpose and of action which has made victory in the war possible for the United Nations can the highest aspiration of humanity - a secure and lasting peace - be realised.

Establishment of an International Organisation.

The decision regarding the establishment of an International Organisation confirms and consolidates the decisions of the United Nations already reached at Teheran, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks and Hot Springs to provide the framework of future world security and prosperity. The problems of mankind are now recognised as the concern of the entire world.

Over large areas of the world millions of people live in poverty, disease, squalor and ignorance. Their continued low standards of life constitute a serious threat to the standards of people everywhere and represent a powerful challenge to the financial and technological resources of the more advanced nations joined together in collaboration to promote world prosperity and the happiness of mankind.

The vast continent of Africa with its 160 million inhabitants and immense though undeveloped resources in mineral, forest and agricultural wealth must command the attention of the international organisation. The rapid economic development, industrialisation and the advancement of the social standards of Africa must form an integral part of any plan to build world prosperity.

United Nations must free themselves of the evils against which they are fighting.

Africa is a land of varied political forms, economic interests

and social and cultural standards. This is complicated by the fact that among the powers with imperial possessions in Africa are fascist Spain and fascist Portugal. It is further complicated by the colour-bar laws and practices obtaining within the territories of some of the United Nations themselves, notably the Union of South Africa. The United Nations are pledged to secure in addition to the military defeat of fascism, the eradication of its moral and political manifestations, chief of which is the theory of the master race against inferior races. If the principles for which we fight do not apply only to Europe, then it is the duty of the United Nations to eliminate the influence of the Spanish and Portuguese fascist regimes and to remove from their own territories those theories and practices for the destruction of which Africans have died on many battlefields. In this way alone can true international collaboration and planning for the future of Africa proceed in conditions free from conflict and favourable to such collaboration.

Recommendations

In the belief that it is the eager desire of the United Nations to begin with the least possible delay the solution of these problems, we recommend:

(1) That the International Organisation should immediately adopt policies and set up all necessary machinery to secure the uniform and rapid development of the economic, social and cultural life of the African peoples.

(2) That guided by the principle of equal rights for all men and recognising that the success of any scheme will depend on the measure

to which Africans themselves participate, steps should be taken for the provision of maximum opportunity for such participation at all levels of administration.

The present inferior political, economic and social status of the African peoples militates against the achievement of harmonious co-operation among the peoples of the world. International co-operation demands the abolition of every kind of discrimination on account of colour, race and creed wherever such discrimination exists.

(3) The present system of exploitation by which the bulk of the wealth produced in Africa goes to enrich foreign monopoly firms and individuals must be replaced by systematic planning and development whereby in the first place the Africans themselves shall be the principal beneficiaries of the wealth produced, then an equal opportunity shall be afforded to all nations in the exchange of products. In this regard an international council representative of producer and consumer interests should be established within the framework of the International Organisation for the stabilisation of commodity prices at levels ensuring reasonable returns to producers and maximum satisfaction to consumers.

(4) Simultaneously with economic development progressive steps should be taken to associate Africans with the management of their own affairs with a view toward the achievement of full self-government within a definite time limit, as in the case of the Philippine Commonwealth.

(5) The eradication of mass illiteracy calls for energetic measures no less sustained than those which aim at the ending of poverty, disease and squalor. The greater the spread of education for both children and adults the greater will be the pace of advancement of the peoples as a whole. That it is possible to eradicate mass

illiteracy within a short space of time is proved by the experience of Soviet Central Asia, where 20 years ago there was a very small percentage of illiteracy, but where now illiteracy has been practically abolished and universities flourish.

(6) The former Italian colonies now under military rule shall have the same treatment as the rest of the African territories and shall be given every assistance in development along with these other territories on the road to full-self-government.

African peoples earned right to benefit by new concept.

We believe that the African peoples by their contribution in man-power and material resources in the war against fascism; by their service in Ethiopia, East Africa, the Western Desert, Italy and in the Battle of Germany; and by their service in Burma in the eastern war against Japan, have earned the right to expect that they shall benefit as a result of the new concept of international co-operation which has been acquired in the course of the grim ordeal of the war of liberation against fascism.

(Signed By)

Harold A. Moody

George Padmore

K.A. Chunchie

J.S. Annan

H.N. Critchlow

Samson Morris

R.W. Beoku-Betts

T.A. Bankole

K.A. Korsah

J.A. Garba-Jahumpa

C.B. Clarke

APPENDIX IIICf. Footnote 52.

It is true that in relation to nationalist and revolutionary movements in the 1920s and 30s, the Comintern pursued an "Asia First" policy, and that its 'theses' on the colonial question, especially the Negro question, were superficial (see David T. Cattell: "Communism and the African Negro". Problems of Communism, 1959, pp. 35-41). It is also true that it was only in South Africa that a Communist Party was established in Africa between 1920-1925; but to argue that Communist interest in colonial Africa suddenly began in the 1950s, is to miss the brief but interesting courtship of Negro nationalist groups by the Comintern in the 1920s. The German Communist deputy and publisher Willi Muenzenberg, whom Padmore knew well and described as 'the Barnum of the Comintern' (Pan-Africanism or Communism?, p. 324) played a key role in the infiltration of such groups and turning them into Comintern satellites. The League Against Imperialism was created in Moscow and Berlin and was the brain child of Comintern organisation man, Muenzenberg. It was one of the many fronts or 'Muenzenberg Shows', or 'Innocents' Club' for the creation of 'sympathising mass organisations' and organising the intellectuals of the bourgeoisie. This theory of infiltration is credited to the C.P.S.U.'s chief theoretician Otto Kuusinen who counselled that the Comintern "must create a whole solar system of organisations and smaller committees around the Communist Party, so to speak, smaller organisations actually under the influence of our Party (not under mechanical leadership)...." (quoted in p. 3 of Labour Party Pamphlet: The Communist Solar System, 1933). For a detailed list of these 'fronts' and their publications see W.S. Sworakowski: The Communist International and its Front Organizations (Stanford, 1965) and the Labour Party Pamphlet referred to earlier. Padmore gives a general account, based on his personal experiences, of Comintern tactics and attitudes to revolutionary and nationalist groups, but he said little about Muenzenberg except that he was a master organiser and a friend of oppressed peoples. Fortunately, Arthur Koestler, who was at one time associated with Muenzenberg, has given us an account of him in his The Invisible Writing (Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1954, pp.194-212), and the late R.N. Carew Hunt has dealt fully with many controversial points in Muenzenberg's career, including the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death in 1940: see R.N. Carew Hunt: "Willi Muenzenberg" in St. Anthony's Papers. Number 9: International Communism, ed. David Footman (Chatto and Windus, London, 1960), pp. 72-87

The League Against Imperialism had its headquarters in Berlin, with branches in France and Britain, as well as in Mexico and China. Mr. Reginald Bridgeman, who was at the time expelled from the Labour Party, became the secretary of the British section of the League. A Bulletin of the League was published in Berlin for the members of

the Executive, the International Council of the League, and for the secretaries of the national sections of the League. The International Bureau, run by L. Gibarti, another Communist, was located in Paris. The General Council met periodically and its resolutions were published in English, French, German and Spanish. In 1928 the membership of the Executive Committee was as follows: President (James Maxton, M.P., Britain, I.L.P. - later expelled because he could not 'keep straight'); Vice-President, Edo Fimmen (Holland), secretary of the International Federation of Transport Workers; Secretaries - Liau Hansin (China) and L. Gibarti (Germany). Committee Members were Jawaral Nehru (I.N.C.); Mastapha Chedli (North Africa) North African Star; Mohamed Hatta (Indonesia); S. Saklatvala M.P. (Britain). After Hitler came to power in 1933, the headquarters of the League was transferred to London, where Mr. Bridgeman became its International Secretary. The French section published a monthly called Journal des Peuples Opprimés in the 1930s, and another broadsheet called Chaines in Paris. [I owe much of the information on the League to Mr. Reginald Bridgeman who lives in Middlesex. In the course of the interview, 20/4/67, he made it clear that the League was not a Communist front organisation (as Lord Brockway thinks in Inside the Left, pp. 167-169), although it approved of the Comintern's anti-colonial policy. Mr. Bridgeman was also connected with the Negro Welfare Association and with West African nationalists like Wallace Johnson and E.F. Small; unfortunately, space does not permit detailed treatment of these]. There is no doubt, however, the League Against Imperialism was the product of Muenzenberg: see the latter's article in Pravda, vol. 28. February 4, 1927, p. 1.

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